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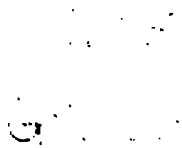

THE

MISCELLANEOUS

WORKS

OF

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

WITH

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

COMPOSED BY HIMSELF:

ILLUSTRATED FROM HIS LETTERS,

WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES AND NARRATIVE,

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN, LORD SHEFFIELD.

A NEW EDITION, WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS,
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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LETTERS.

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LETTERS

LETTERS

TO AND FROM

EDWARD GIBBON, Esq.

N° IX.

This Letter, in the early hand-writing of Mr. GIBBON, (probably about the time of his first leaving Lausanne,) seems to be under the assumed character of a Swedish traveller, writing to a Swiss friend, delineating the defects he discovered in the government of Berne. In pointing out those defects he seems to have had the intention of suggesting remedies; but, as he is entering on this topic, the manuscript ends abruptly. The excellence of this curious paper will apologize for its great length.

NON, mon cher ami, je ne veux point être cosmopolite. Loin de moi ce titre fastueux, sous lequel nos philosophes cachent une égale indifférence pour tout le genre humain. Je veux aimer ma patrie, et pour aimer, il me faut des préférences; mais

No; my dear friend, I will not be a citizen of the world; I reject with scorn that proud title, under which our philosophers conceal an equal indifference for the whole human race. I will love my country; and to love it above all others, there must be reasons for my preference: but, if I am not mistaken, my heart is

mais ou je me trompe, ou mon cœur est susceptible de plus d'une. Quand j'aurois tout sacrifié pour la Suède, mon pays natal, je ne me serois point encore acquitté envers elle; je lui dois la vie et la fortune: mais que cette vié seroit triste, que cette fortune me seroit à charge, si, expatrié dès ma tendre jeunesse, votre pays n'eut pas formé mon goût et ma raison à des mœurs moins grossières que les nôtres! Je me montrerois indigne de ces bienfaits, s'ils ne m'avoient pas inspiré la plus vive reconnoissance. Aujourd'hui que la Suède, tranquille à l'abri des loix, n'exige de ses enfans que de sentir leur bonheur, je puis, sans l'offenser, jetter un regard sur le Pays de Vaud, mon autre patrie, me réjouir avec vous de ses avantages, et compâtir à ses maux.

Votre climat est beau, votre terroir fertile; vous avez pour le commerce intérieur des facilités, dont il

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susceptible of affection for more countries than one. Did I sacrifice all to Sweden, I should only pay my debt of gratitude to the land in which I was born, and to which I owe my life and fortune. Yet life and fortune would have been but melancholy burthens, if, after my banishment from home in early youth, your country had not formed my taste and reason, and taught me more refined morals than our own. I should prove myself unworthy of this goodness, did it not inspire me with the liveliest gratitude: and now that Sweden, enjoying tranquillity under the protection of laws, requires nothing from its subjects but a just sense of their happiness, I may direct my attention, without offence, to the Pays de Vaud, my second country; rejoicing with you in its advantages, or commiserating its misfortunes.

You enjoy a fine climate, a fertile soil, and have conveniences for

il ne tient qu'à vous de profiter. Mais je considère plutôt les habitans, que l'habitation. On va chercher les philosophes à Londres. Paris attire dans son sein tous ceux qui n'aiment que la douceur de la société. Votre pays le cède à ces deux capitales, là où elles brillent; mais cependant il réunit tous leurs avantages respectifs; il est le seul où tout à la fois on ose penser, et on sache vivre. Que vous manque-t-il? la liberté: et privés d'elle, tout vous manque.

Cette vérité vous surprend, elle vous blesse. Pouvoir dire que nous ne sommes pas libres, me répondez vous, prouve que nous le sommes. Il le prouveroit peut-être, si j'écrivois à Lausanne; ou plutôt là même il ne prouveroit rien. Vos maîtres connoissent la maxime du Cardinal Mazarin, de vous laisser parler, pourvu que vous les laissiez agir. Ainsi le procès n'est point encore jugé.

Si

for internal commerce, from which great benefit might be derived. But I consider the people rather than their territory. Philosophy flourishes in London; Paris is the centre of those attracted by the allurements of polished society. Your country, though inferior to those capitals, yet unites in some measure their respective advantages; since it is the only country whose inhabitants, while they think freely and boldly, live politely and elegantly. What then is wanting? Liberty; and deprived of it, you have lost your all.

This truth surprises and offends you. The right of complaining, you answer, that we are not free, is a proof of our liberty. If I wrote at Lausanne, the argument would have weight; yet even there, it would not be convincing; for your masters are not ignorant of Cardinal Mazarine's maxim, and are willing to allow you to talk, provided you allow them to act; so that the process is not yet determined.

Si j'écrivois pour le peuple je m'addresserois à ses passions; je le ferois souvenir de cette maxime de tous les tems, que dans les républiques, ceux qui sont libres, sont plus libres, et ceux qui sont esclaves, plus esclaves que partout ailleurs. Mais avec un ami tel que vous, je ne dois chercher que la vérité, et n'employer que la raison. Quand je compare votre état avec celui de vos voisins, c'est avec plaisir que je le prononce heureux. Traversez votre lac et vos montagnes, vous trouverez partout un peuple digne d'un meilleur sort; sa raison abrutie par la superstition, le patrimoine de ses pères, et le fruit de son industrie, en proye au partisan, ou au hussard. Sa vie sacrifiée à tout moment au caprice d'un seul homme, qui, lorsqu'il entend parler de vingt milles de ses semblables, morts dans le service de son ambition, dira froidement, qu'ils ont fait leur devoir.

Vous,

If I wrote for the people I would speak to their passions, and hold a language repeated in all ages, that under republics, those who are free are more free, and those who are enslaved, more enslaved, than under any other form of government. But with a friend like you I would seek only the maxims of truth, and employ only the arguments of reason. When I compare your condition with that of surrounding nations, I can sincerely congratulate you on your happiness. Whenever we quit the neighbourhood of your lake and mountains, we find men who, though worthy of a better fate, are plunged in the most abject superstition; whose property and industry are the spoils of a licentious soldiery; and whose lives are ready every moment to be sacrificed to the caprice of one man, who, when he hears that twenty thousand of his fellow-creatures have fallen sacrifices to his ambition, is contented with saying coldly, "they have done their duty."

You,

Vous, au contraire, professez un Christianisme, ramené à la divine pureté de son institution, enseigné par de dignes pasteurs, à qui on permet de se faire aimer, de se faire respecter, mais non de se faire craindre. Votre union avec le Corps Helvétique vous a assuré depuis deux siècles une paix unique dans l'histoire. Vos impôts sont petits, l'administration douce. On n'entend point parler parmi vous de ces sentences sans procès, sans crime, sans accusateur, qui arrachent un citoyen du milieu de sa famille. L'on ne voit jamais le souverain, on le sent rarement. Cependant si la liberté consiste à n'être soumis qu'à des loix, dont l'objet est le bien commun de la société, vous n'êtes point libre.

Quand la violence des uns, et la foiblesse des autres, ont rendu nécessaires les sociétés civiles, il a fallu

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You, on the contrary, enjoy a Christianity brought back to the purity of its original principles, taught publicly by worthy ministers, who are loved and respected, but who have it not in their power to become the objects of fear. Your connexion with the Swiss cantons has preserved to you the blessings of peace two centuries; a thing unexampled in history. Your taxes are moderate; and the public administration is gentle. You have not to complain of those arbitrary sentences, which, without any form of legal procedure, without an accuser, and without a crime, have been known to tear citizens from the bosoms of their families. The sovereign is never seen; the weight of his authority is rarely felt; yet if liberty consists in being subject to laws which impartially consult the interests of all the members of the community, you do not enjoy that blessing.

When the injustice of some, and the weakness of others, showed the necessity for civil society, individuals were obliged to,

a fallu renoncer à cette indépendance si chère, et si pernicieuse. Il a fallu que toutes les volontés particulières se fondissent dans une volonté générale; à laquelle des punitions réglées obligeassent chaque citoyen de conformer ses actions. Qu'il est délicat, ce pouvoir de fixer la volonté générale! En quelles mains doit on le remettre? Sera-ce à un monarque dès-lors absolu? Je sais que l'intérêt bien entendu du prince ne se peut séparer d'avec celui de son peuple, et qu'en travaillant pour lui, il travaille pour soi même. Tel est le langage de la philosophie. Mais ce langage n'est pas un de ceux que les précepteurs font étudier aux rois; et si un heureux naturel leur en donne quelqu' idée, leurs passions, ou celles d'un ministre, d'un confesseur, d'une maîtresse, l'effacent bientôt. Le peuple gémit, mais il faut qu'il ait gémi long tems, avant que son maître s'apperçoive qu'il est de l'intérêt

renounce their beloved, but pernicious, independence. All particular wills were melted down into the general will of the public; by which, under the sanction of definite punishments, men became bound to regulate their conduct. But it is a matter of the utmost delicacy to determine with whom that general will ought to be deposited. Shall it reside in the breast of a prince, who thereby becomes absolute? I know that the true interests of a prince can never be separated from those of his people, and that in exerting himself for their benefit, he labours for his own. This is the language of philosophy, but it is seldom spoken by the preceptors of princes; and if the latter sometimes read it in their own hearts, the impression is speedily effaced by contrary passions, in themselves, their confessors, their ministers, or mistresses. The groans of the people are not soon heard; and their master learns only

térêt d'un berger de conserver son troupeau. Il faut donc que le pouvoir législatif soit partagé. Un conseil dont les membres s'éclairent et se contiennent les uns les autres, paroît en être un dépositaire bien choisi. Mais la liberté attache à ce conseil une condition fondamentale. Elle veut que chaque ordre des citoyens, chaque partie de l'état, y ait ses représentans intéressés à s'opposer à toute loi qui seroit nuisible à ses droits, ou contraire à son bonheur, puisqu'eux mêmes en sentiroient les premiers, les mauvais effets. Une telle assemblée fera rarement des fautes grossières, et si elle paye quelquefois le tribut à l'humanité, elle peut rougir de ses erreurs, et les réparer aussi tôt. Ce portrait est il le vôtre? J'entre dans votre pays, je vois deux nations distinguées par leurs droits, leurs occupations, et leurs mœurs. L'une, composée de trois cens familles, est née pour commander;

only by a fatal experience, that it is the interest of a shepherd to preserve his flock. The legislative power, therefore, cannot safely be entrusted to a single person. A council, whose members mutually instruct, and mutually check each other, appears to be its proper depository. But in this council one condition is essentially requisite. It must consist of deputies from every order in the state, interested by their own safety in opposing every regulation inconsistent with the happiness of that order to which they belong. Such a council will rarely be guilty of gross errors; and should this sometimes happen, it will soon blush for, and repair them. Is this the picture of your legislature? When I survey your country, I behold two nations, distinctly characterised by their rights, employments, and manners: the one, consisting of three hundred families, born to command; the other, consisting

mander; l'autre, de cent mille, n'est formée que pour obéir. Toutes les prétensions humiliantes des monarques héréditaires se renouvellent à votre égard, et deviennent encore plus humiliantes de la part de vos égaux. La comparaison de vos deux états vous est trop facile. Rien ne vous aide à l'éloigner.

Un conseil de trois cens personnes décide de tous vos intérêts en dernier ressort, et si ses intérêts et les vôtres ne sont pas d'accord, qui doit l'emporter? Non seulement ce sénat est législateur, mais il exécute ses propres loix. Cette union de deux puissances qu'on ne devoit jamais réunir, les rend chacune plus formidables. Quand elles sont séparées, la puissance législative redoute les résolutions violentes; elles seroient inutiles, si l'on n'armoit pas les mains de la puissance qui les doit exécuter, et cette puissance est toujours

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of an hundred thousand, doomed to submission. The former are invested, as a body, with all the prerogatives of hereditary monarchs, which are the more humiliating to you their subjects, because they belong to men apparently your equals. The comparison between yourselves and them is made every moment; no circumstance tends to conceal it from your fancy.

A council of three hundred persons is the sovereign umpire of your dearest interests, which will always be sacrificed when they clash with their own. This council is invested with the executive, as well as the legislative power; two branches of authority which can never be united, without rendering each of them too formidable to the subject. When they belong to different persons, or assemblies, the legislature will not venture to form violent resolutions, because these would be of no avail, unless they were carried into execution by another power, always its rival, and often

toujours sa rivale, et son contrepoids. Mais ce n'est pas assez que cette union aiguise la glaive de l'autorité publique, elle le remet encore dans un plus petit nombre de mains : dans le dernier siècle le grand conseil de Berne se renouvelloit lui même ; c'étoit déjà un pas vers l'oligarchie : pourquoi exclure des élections le corps de la Bourgeoisie ? Alors même le gouvernement s'appuyoit sur un fondement assez étroit. Bientôt des inconveniens se firent sentir ; la brigue, la vénalité, la débauche, signaloient l'entrée des citoyens dans le conseil souverain, et les riches ambitieux donnoient tout, pour pouvoir tout invahir. Une députation révocable de vingt six conseillers, établie dès l'enfance de la république, pour veiller à l'exécution des loix, devint chargée du soin de remplir les places de ce grand conseil dont elle-même tiroit son origine. On y ajoutoit seize sénateurs choisis de la manière la

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often its antagonist. The sword of authority is not only sharpened by this union, but is thereby confined to a smaller number of hands. In the last century the great council of Berne began to elect its own members : which was a great step towards oligarchy, since it excluded from elections the citizens at large, and thereby narrowed the basis of the government. But this arrangement was liable to other inconveniences. Intrigue, venality, and debauchery signalized the admission of citizens into the sovereign council ; and ambitious men squandered their wealth, that they might purchase a right to indulge their rapacity. A committee of six counsellors, established in the infancy of the republic, to watch the execution of the laws, and whose offices were held at pleasure, became entrusted with the power of naming the members of the grand council, by which this committee itself was appointed. Its number was augmented by sixteen senators, chosen in

la plus favorable aux factieux. Ils possédoient d'abord leur pouvoir collectivement, mais peu à peu l'intérêt particulier leur fit entendre qu'il valoit mieux permettre à chacun de nommer son fils, son gendre, et son parent. Les familles puissantes qui dominoient alors dans le sénat, y dominent encore. Les de Watteville, et les Steiguers, y remplissent une trentaine de places. Le commerce intéressé de bienfaits, où l'on passe dans le petit conseil par les suffrages de ses parens, pour faire entrer de nouveaux parens dans le grand conseil, a déjà réduit le nombre des familles qui siègent dans celui-ci, à environ quatre-vingt. Ces maisons souveraines ont un égal mépris pour ceux que le droit naturel auroit dû rendre leurs concitoyens, et pour ceux qui le sont par la constitution de l'état. Il manque même aux premiers une ressource que les monarques les plus absolus n'ont pas osé ôter à leurs

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in the manner most favourable to the designs of faction. They exercised their power at first collectively, but by degrees they came to understand that their particular interests would be better promoted by each naming his son, son-in-law, or kinsman. The powerful families which then commanded the senate, still rule it at present. Thirty places are filled by the Watteville and Steiguers. This selfish traffic, by which the members of the little council are elected by the great council, consisting of their own relations, that they may name other relations to seats in the great council, has reduced the number of families, which have a right to sit in the latter, to nearly fourscore. These princely families look down with equal contempt on those who are their fellow-citizens by the law of nature, and those who were rendered such by the constitution of their country. The former class is deprived of a resource which the most absolute princes have seldom

à leurs sujets ; je veux parler de ces tribunaux reconnus du souverain, et révérés du peuple, pour être l'organe de la patrie, et les dépositaires des loix. Toutes les volontés du prince, qui doivent être obéies, le sont plus facilement, quand les sujets voyent combien elles sont raisonnables, puisqu'elles ont passé par l'examen de ces magistrats, qu'on ne peut ni tromper, ni séduire, ni intimider. Aussi répondent ils à cette considération, par une résistance respectueuse, mais déterminée contre l'oppression, où ils étalent tout ce que la raison, la liberté, et l'éloquence peuvent inspirer à des citoyens zélés. C'est principalement dans ces tribunaux paisibles que je trouve ces qualités. Privés d'armes, ils ne doivent leur pouvoir qu'à leur probité, et à leur éloquence. Est il étonnant que ceux, qui n'ont que cette instrument, s'appliquent le plus à le cultiver ? Quelles leçons pour les rois, que les remontrances du Parlement de Paris ! Quels

seldom ventured to wrest from their subjects; I mean those courts of justice acknowledged by the prince, and revered by the people, as the organs of public opinion, and the depositories of the laws. The commands of the sovereign are obeyed with cheerfulness only when their propriety is confirmed by the approbation of those tribunals, whose members it has been found difficult either to deceive, to seduce, or to intimidate. Their resistance to oppression is respectful, but firm; and in exerting it, they display that warmth of eloquence with which reason and liberty inspire good citizens. In the members of those peaceful tribunals, such qualities appear in their greatest lustre. . Destitute of arms, their whole strength lies in their talents and their probity. What noble lessons to kings have been given by the parliament of Paris! What

Quels modèles pour le peuple que la conduite des Mandarins de la Chine! Frappé par un tribunal de cette espèce, le monarque ne peut méconnoître les gémissemens de la patrie. Les citoyens y apprennent qu'ils ont une patrie; ils s'attachent à l'aimer, à étudier ses loix, à se former à toutes les vertus publiques. Elles mûrissent dans le silence, l'occasion les développe, ou elles se font l'occasion. Les états du Pays de Vaud, respectables sous les Rois de Bourgogne, et sous les Ducs de Savoye, étoient ce tribunal. Composés de la noblesse, du clergé, et des députés des villes principales, ils s'assembloient tous les ans à Moudon. C'étoit le conseil perpétuel du prince. Sans leur consentement, il ne pouvoit, ni faire de nouvelles loix, ni établir de nouveaux impôts. Si j'étois sur les lieux j'établirois ces droits, par vos monumens les plus authentiques.

What excellent examples to subjects are set by the Mandarines of China! Monarchs *must* hear the groans of their people, when such respectable bodies of men are their organs. The people too learn that they have a country, which they will begin to love, to study its laws, and to form themselves to public virtues. These virtues ripen silently; they are exerted when an opportunity offers; and sometimes they will make an opportunity for their own exhibition. In the Païs de Vaud, which was equally respectable under the Kings of Burgundy and the Dukes of Savoy, the states formed such a tribunal. They were composed of the nobility, clergy, and deputies from the principal cities, which annually assembled at Moudon, and formed the perpetual council of the prince, without whose consent he could neither enact new laws, nor impose new taxes. Were I on the spot, I could prove the existence of those rights by the most authentic records. At a distance

thentiques. Tout éloigné que j'en suis, je ne crains pas d'appeller à leur témoignage. Il me reste toujours une preuve moins sensible pour le peuple, mais aussi décisive pour les gens de lettres: c'est l'analogie. Les Barbares du cinquième siècle jettèrent par toute l'Europe, les racines de ce gouvernement que Charlemagne établit dans les Pays Bas, la France, l'Italie, la Suisse, et l'Allemagne. Quelques évènemens, les degrés, et les tems où les arrière-fiefs se formèrent des fiefs, où le clergé acquit des terres seigneuriales, où les villes achetèrent leurs affranchissemens, y apportèrent de légères différences. Mais le fond de cette constitution est demeuré dans toutes les révolutions, et rien de plus libre que ce fonds. Ces états, leurs membres, et leurs droits se conservèrent toujours, et partout ils étoient les mêmes.

Je vous entends, mon ami, qui m'interrompez. Je

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distance I can only appeal to their testimony, and employ an analogical proof, which will be sufficiently convincing to men of letters. The Barbarians, who overflowed Europe in the fifth century, every where laid the foundation of that form of government which Charlemagne established in the Low Countries, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. The different modes of tenure which were at different times introduced, the various degrees of dependance which one fief came to have on another, the acquisitions of lordships by the clergy, and the purchase of franchises by cities; all these circumstances occasioned but slight differences in the ground-work of the constitution, which remained unalterably founded on a firm basis of liberty. The states, their members, and their rights were invariably maintained; remaining uniformly the same at all times, and in all places.

I think that I hear you, my friend, interrupting me. Hitherto, you

Je vous ai écouté, me dites vous, avec patience: mais que voulez vous conclure de ce tableau de notre gouvernement? Bien ou mal construit, nous n'en ressentons que des effets salutaires, et vos conseils, vos états, auroient de la peine à nous dégoûter de nos magistrats anciens, pour nous faire essayer des nouveautés.

Arrêtez, Monsieur; je vous ai parlé en homme libre, et vous me répondez dans le langage de la servitude. Arrêtez. En convenant pour un moment de votre bonheur, de qui le tenez vous? de la constitution? Vous n'osez pas le dire. C'est donc du prince? Les Romains en devoient un plus grand à Titus. Ils étoient cependant de vils esclaves. Brutus vous auroit appris que, dans un état déspotique, le prince peut quelquefois vouloir de bien: mais que dans les états libres, il ne peut que

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you say, I have listened to you with patience; but what is your conclusion from this picture of our government? Whatever defects there may be in its principles, we have experienced its salutary consequences; and the states and assemblies, which you so much commend, will not easily make us abolish our ancient magistracies, in order to try innovations.

It is time, Sir, to pause; I spoke to you as became a freeman, and you answer me in the language of slavery. Let us admit for a moment your prosperity; to whom do you owe it? You will not answer, to the constitution. It is due then to your rulers. The Romans owed a prosperity yet greater to Titus; but still remained the basest of slaves. Brutus would have taught you that a despot may sometimes choose to promote the public happiness; but that the magistrates of a free people can have no other ish.

que le vouloir. La félicité actuelle du citoyen et de l'esclave, est souvent égale, mais celle du dernier est précaire, puisqu'elle est fondée sur les passions des hommes, pendant que celle du premier est assurée. Elle est liée avec les loix qui contiennent également ces mêmes passions dans le souverain et dans le paysan.

Mais malheureusement on ne trouve que trop de choses à reprendre dans votre administration politique. Je vais détailler des fautes, des négligences, des oppressions. Vous vous récrierez sur ma malignité, mais en secret votre esprit grossira le catalogue de cent articles que j'aurai ou ignorés ou oubliés. Il est du devoir du souverain de faire jouir son peuple de tous les avantages de la société civile. Des guerres entreprises pour sa défense, l'en détourneront quelquefois; mais dès que le calme renait dans ses états, des établissemens utiles, et de sages

wish. The advantages actually enjoyed by a citizen and a slave may be the same; but those of the latter are precarious, having no other foundation than the changeable passions of men; whereas those of the former are secure, being solidly supported on those laws which curb guilty passions in the prince as well as in the peasant.

But unfortunately too many faults may be found in your public administration. I shall give you the black list of omissions and oppressions, which, notwithstanding that you will exclaim against my malignity, your own memory will augment by an hundred articles, which I may be either ignorant of, or forget to mention. It is the duty of a sovereign to procure for his people all the happiness of which their condition is susceptible. His public spirited exertions may be suspended by the exigencies of defensive war; but as soon as peace is restored, he will be continually and usefully

sages loix, la religion, les mœurs, les sciences, le commerce, les manufactures, l'agriculture, et la police, méritent toute son attention, et l'en récompenseront avec usure. Sur ces principes jugeons le sénat de Berne. Il a été maître du Pays de Vaud depuis l'an 1536. Quand je considère ce qu'étoient alors la France, l'Angleterre, la Hollande, ou l'Allemagne, j'ai de la peine à me persuader qu'elles étoient les mêmes pays que ceux qui portent aujourd'hui ces noms. De barbares, ils sont devenus civilisés; d'ignorans, éclairés; et de pauvres, riches. Je vois des villes où il y avoit des déserts, et les forêts défrichées se sont converties en champs fertiles. Leurs princes, et leurs ministres, un Henri quatre, un Sully, un Colbert, une Elisabeth, un de Witt, un Frédéric-Guillaume, ont opéré ces merveilles. La perspective du Pays de Vaud n'est point

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fully occupied with the interests of religion, laws, morals, sciences, police, commerce, and agriculture. Let us try the merits of the senate of Berne by these maxims. The members of this senate have been masters of the Païs de Vaud since the year one thousand five hundred and thirty-six. When we consider the deplorable condition in those days of France, England, Holland, and Germany, we can scarcely imagine that they were the same countries with those respectively known at present by the same names. Their barbarism has been civilized, their ignorance enlightened, their poverty enriched; their deserts have become cities, and their forests now wave with yellow harvests. These wonders have been effected by their princes and ministers: a Henry the Fourth, a Sully, a Colbert, an Elizabeth, a de Witt, and a Frederick William. The comparative condition of the Païs de Vaud at those two remote æras, does not present

point aussi riante. Les arts languissent, faute de ces récompenses que le prince seul peut donner; nul commerce, nulles manufactures, nuls projets utiles pour le pays; un engourdissement général qui règne partout. Cependant les princes dont je viens de parler n'avoient que des momens pour ces objets, où les Bernois ont eu des siècles. Que n'auroient ils pas fait, ces grands hommes, rarement tranquilles sur le trône, si pendant deux cens douze ans, ils n'eussent eu que des voisins pacifiques, et des peuples soumis? Je m'en rapporte à vous même. Indiquez moi quelque établissement vraiment utile que vous deviez au souverain. Mais ne m'indiquez pas l'académie de Lausanne, fondée par des vues de dévotion, dans la chaleur d'une réformation, negligée depuis, et toujours académie,

present so pleasing a picture. There the arts still languish, for want of those encouragements which princes only can bestow: the country is still destitute of commerce and manufactures: we hear not of any projects for promoting the public prosperity: we see nothing but the marks of an universal lethargy. Yet the princes above mentioned had but moments for executing their great designs; the senators of Berne have had ages. What benefits might not those patriotic kings have conferred on their subjects, if, instead of having their thrones continually shaken by war and sedition, they had enjoyed during two centuries the advantage of having loyal subjects and pacific neighbours? I appeal to yourself; point out a single useful establishment which the Pais de Vaud owes to the sovereignty of Berne: but do not tell me of the academy of Lausanne, founded on motives of religion during the zeal of reformation, but since totally neglected, though a worthy

académie, quoique un digne magistrat de cette ville, proposât de l'ériger en université.

Non ce n'est point une politique peu éclairée qui fait agir vos maîtres. Je connois trop leur habileté. Mais un monarque aime également tous ses sujets. Les citoyens d'une ville capitale voyent au contraire d'un œil jaloux l'agrandissement des provinces. Si elles s'élèvent, disent ils, nous tombons. Nos égales pour les lumières et les richesses, elles voudroient bientôt l'être en pouvoir. Rappellez vous l'an 1685. La mauvaise politique de Louis XIV. expatria la partie la plus industrieuse de ses sujets; une multitude se réfugia dans le Pays de Vaud. Il étoit prochain, il étoit François. Ils ne demandoient qu'un asile, et l'auroient payé au poids de l'or par les richesses, et les arts plus

worthy magistrate of that city proposed the laudable design of erecting it into an university.

Your masters err not through ignorance. They are not deficient, I know, in political abilities. But while a prince treats with impartial bounty all his subjects, the citizens of an aristocratical capital are apt to behold with jealousy the improvement of the provinces. Their elevation, they think, must pave the way for their own downfal; and if they become their equals in point of knowledge and riches, they will soon be tempted, they imagine, to aspire at an equality with themselves in power. Recal to memory the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-five; when the wretched policy of Louis the Fourteenth drove from their country the most industrious portion of his subjects, many of whom sought refuge in the Païs de Vaud; a neighbouring district, and speaking their own language. They requested only an asylum, the benefit of which they would richly have repaid by the wealth

plus précieux que les richesses, qu'ils vous apportoient. Mais ici la politique partiale des Bernois s'épouvanta. " Si nous faisons participer ces fugitifs à notre droit de Bourgeoisie, la fortune nous sera commune; mais comment élever des mortels au rang des dieux? Si nous les laissons confondus parmi nos sujets, nos sujets recueilleront le fruit de leur industrie." Ils conclurent enfin avec l'ambassadeur de Porsenna—

—— Qu'il vaut mieux, qu'un roi sur le trône affermi
Commande à des sujets, malheureux, mais soumis,
Que d'avoir à dompter, au sein de l'abondance,
D'un peuple trop heureux l'indocile arrogance.

Ces exilés, las d'essuyer des refus, où ils devoient s'attendre à des prières, passèrent en Hollande, en Prusse, et en Angleterre, où les souverains savoient mieux profiter de cette occasion unique. Il en resta une partie dans le Pays de Vaud, mais c'étoit la

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wealth which they brought with them, and their skill in manufactures, still more valuable. But the narrow policy of Berne took the alarm. " If we make these men citizens of Berne, their interests will coincide with our own. But is it fit that mortals should be raised to the rank of gods? If they are mixed with the mass of our subjects, our subjects will be enriched by their industry." They concluded therefore, with the ambassadors of Porsenna—" that it was more desirable for a prince to govern a poor but submissive people, than to contend with the unruly passions of men pampered by prosperity."

The emigrants, disgusted at being repeatedly refused what they ought to have been requested to accept, travelled to Holland, Prussia and England, whose rulers had the good sense to avail themselves of an emergency as favourable as it was singular. A part of them indeed remained in the Païs de Vaud, but the

la partie la plus pauvre, et la plus fainéante, qui n'avoit ni le moyen, ni la volonté d'aller plus loin.

A peine ces malheureux commençoient ils à oublier leurs souffrances passées que l'expérience leur fit sentir, que pour fuir les persécutions, il faut fuir les hommes. La partie souveraine de l'état avoit sucé avec le lait, toute la dureté du système de Calvin, théologien atrabilaire, qui aimoit trop la liberté, pour souffrir que les Chrétiens portassent d'autres fers que les siens. D'ailleurs sa conformité avec les idées d'un célèbre philosophe, intéressoit l'honneur du nom Allemand à le soutenir. Comme les sentimens s'étoient adoucis dans le Pays de Vaud, en proportion avec les mœurs, il falloit y envoyer des formulaires, et des inquisiteurs, destinés à faire autant d'hypocrites qu'ils pourroient, non à la vérité par le fer et le feu, mais par les menaces et les privations d'emploi.

En

poorest and the idlest, who had neither money nor spirit to travel farther.

These unhappy fugitives had no sooner begun to forget their past sufferings, than they learned by fatal experience that, in order to avoid persecution, it was necessary to fly from the society of men. The sovereigns of the country in which they had settled had imbibed the severe system of Calvin, a stern theologian, who loved liberty too well, to endure that Christians should wear any other chains than those imposed by himself. His near conformity in opinion with a celebrated German philosopher, interested the honour of the German name in supporting his doctrines. But in the Païs de Vaud the asperity of religious opinions had softened with the improvement of society. It became necessary, therefore, to send thither formulas and inquisitors, designed to make as many hypocrites as possible, not indeed by fire and sword, but by threats and deposition from office.

In

En soutenant les droits de l'humanité, je n'outre point les maximes de la tolérance. Je veux bien que le magistrat ne distribue les récompenses du public, qu'à ceux qui enseignent la religion du public. Je ne lui défends pas même de contenir dans le silence ces novateurs trop hardis qui voudroient éclairer le peuple sur certains objets où l'erreur fait son bonheur. Mais que le souverain se prêtant avec chaleur aux minuties théologiques, décide des questions qu'on ne peut décider, assurément il est absurde. Qu'imposant des confessions de foi, il ne laisse à des pasteurs vieillis dans le ministère, et qui ne demandoient qu'à se taire, que le choix du mensonge ou de la mendicité, assurément il est injuste. Mais la persécution cessa. Qui la fit cesser? Un sentiment de honte? les larmes des sujets? ou bien la crainte qu'inspira l'entreprise d'un Davel, enthousiaste il est vrai, mais enthousiaste pour le bien public? Encore même

In supporting the rights of man, I would not carry too far the maxims of toleration. It is just that public rewards should be bestowed only on those who teach the religion of the public; and those bold innovators, who would impart a dangerous light to the people, may very properly be restrained by the arm of the magistrates. But it surely is absurd, that the sovereign should interfere in theological minutiæ, and take part warmly in questions which are incapable of being decided. It is particularly unjust, that he should impose confessions of faith on old ministers, who wish to avoid disputation; leaving them the miserable alternative of falsehood or beggary. But this persecution has now ceased. What put an end to it? It was not shame, nor the tears of the people, but the boldness of Davel, that meritorious enthusiast.

même il règne à Lausanne une inquisition sourde. Les noms d'Arminien et de Socinien remplissent encore ces lettres où de tres honnêtes gens rendent compte à leurs protecteurs des sentimens de leurs concitoyens; et c'est suivant ces indices que les places se distribuent.

Je viens, non pas d'épuiser, mais d'indiquer quelques défauts qui se trouvent dans votre puissance législative. Passons à l'exécutrice. Celle-ci est la force publique, comme l'autre est la volonté publique. Mais un seul corps, un seul homme, peut délibérer et décider pour toute une nation. Il ne peut tout seul agir pour elle. L'administration politique, composée d'un nombre infini de branches, veut qu'un grand nombre d'officiers, soumis les uns aux autres, s'employent à faire jouer la machine à laquelle le maître ne peut que donner le mouvement général. Les honneurs,

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Even to the present day, a secret inquisition still reigns at Lausanne; where the names of Arminian and Socinian are often mentioned in the letters written by very honest people to their patrons of Berne; and offices are often given or withheld according to the reports made of the religious tenets of the candidates.

Having made these strictures on your legislature, which by no means exhaust the subject, I proceed to consider the defects of your executive power; which is the public force, as the legislature ought to be the public will. But a single council, or a single man, may deliberate and resolve for a whole nation; the executive power, on the contrary, requires the exertions of many: as it is composed of a great variety of branches, many officers, subordinate one to the other, must actuate the different parts of the machine, to which the chief magistrate can only communicate the first

neurs, et les avantages, que les loix attachent à ces emplois, doivent être ouverts à tous les citoyens, que leurs talens et leur éducation ont mis en état de les remplir. Les fardeaux leur sont communs à tous, les récompenses doivent l'être aussi. Un gouvernement monarchique satisfait aisément à ces justes prétensions. A l'exception de quelques courtisans, qui approchent la personne du prince d'assez près, pour substituer la flatterie aux services, tous ses sujets lui sont égaux. Dès qu'un homme a du mérite, ou, si l'on veut de la faveur, on ne lui demande point s'il est Normand ou Provençal. D'Epernon étoit Gascon; Richelieu, Champenois; Mazarin, Romain. Mais dans les républiques aristocratiques, les souverains composés de toute une ville veulent être législateurs en corps, et partager entre eux en détail tous les emplois considérables.

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first general movement. The honours and emoluments legally attached to such offices, ought to be open to all those citizens who are properly qualified for discharging them. Each individual, as he bears a share of the public burdens, is entitled also to a share of the public rewards. This just arrangement is easily maintained in monarchies; where, with the exception of a few courtiers, who, by being continually about the prince's person, have an opportunity of substituting flattery instead of real services, all the inhabitants of the kingdom are treated with comparative equity. In France, provided a man has court-favour or merit, the question is never asked whether he comes from Provence or Normandy. D'Epernon was born in Gascony; Richelieu, in Champagne; Mazarine, in Rome. But in aristocratical republics, the citizens of one town are not contented with being sovereigns collectively, unless they individually appropriate all offices of honour or emolument.

rables. Les talens, les lumières, dans votre pays, sont inutiles pour quiconque n'est pas né Bernois, et dans un autre sens ils sont également inutiles pour qui l'est. Le sujet se voit condamné par sa naissance à ramper dans une honteuse obscurité. Le désespoir le saisit; il néglige ce qui ne le peut mener à rien, et le grand homme ne devient qu'un homme agréable. Si je parlois de faire participer les sujets aux Bailliages, les Bernois crieroient au sacrilège; les Bailliages sont le patrimoine de l'état, et nous sommes l'état. Il est vrai qu'on vous laisse les Lieutenances Baillivales; mais vous savez assez qu'on y mêle certaines stipulations, de façon que, si le nouveau magistrat ne vit pas quelque tems, sa famille perd au marché.

Privés

lument. In the canton of Berne talents and information are not of the smallest use to any one who is not born in the capital; and in another sense they are useless to those born there; because they *must* make their way without them. Their subjects in the Païs de Vaud are condemned, by the circumstances of their birth, to a condition of shameful obscurity. They naturally become, therefore, a prey to despair; and neglecting to cultivate talents which they can never enjoy an opportunity to display, those who had capacities for becoming great men are contented with making themselves agreeable companions. Should I propose that the subjects obtained a right to hold the lucrative employments of *Baillis*, or governors of districts, the aristocratical families of Berne would think me guilty of a crime little less than sacrilege. "The emoluments of these offices form the patrimony of the state; and we are the state." It is true, that you in the Païs de Vaud may be deputies to the Baillis; but the advantages belonging to that subordinate magistracy are obtained on certain conditions, which, unless the holder of the office lives a certain number of years, renders his bargain a very bad one for his family.

What

Privés de ressources, que reste il aux gentilshommes du Pays de Vaud? le service étranger. Mais on n'a pas manqué de leur rendre cette carrière des plus épineuses, et de leur y fermer l'accès des grades un peu élevés. Je ne dirai rien du brillant service de France. Les dépenses sont inévitables, et la paye si modique que l'enseigne se ruine, le capitaine vit à peine, et même le colonel ne peut amasser. Ainsi vous devez bénir le soin paternel du souverain qui a dressé toutes les capitulations, de manière à ne vous point introduire en tentation. Ne parlons que du service des Etats Généraux, service plus utile que riant, ou l'on s'ennuye et s'enrichit. Par le traité de 1712, le Canton de Berne accorda vingt quatre compagnies à leurs Hautes Puissances, et promit de permettre qu'on en fit toujours des recrues dans leurs états. Seize compagnies étoient destinées aux Bernois, et les souverains

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What encouragement is then left for the gentlemen of the Païs de Vaud? That of foreign service. But to them, even this road to preferment is extremely difficult, and to attain the higher ranks is impossible. I speak not of the brilliant service of France: in that country, expense is unavoidable; the ensign is ruined, the captain can scarcely live, and the colonel cannot save money. You are therefore obliged to the paternal care of the magistrates of Berne, whose treaties for supplying troops to France do not lead you into temptation. Let us only consider the service of Holland, a service more profitable than showy, where officers have nothing to do but to grow rich. By the treaty of 1712, the Canton of Berne granted the use of twenty-four companies to their High Mightinesses, and promised that they should always be allowed to recruit them in their territories. But the command of sixteen of those companies was engrossed by the citizens of Berne,

rains partageoient avec leurs sujets les huit autres compagnies, dont on daignoit laisser l'entrée ouverte à ceux ci: ainsi à ne supposer le crédit des Bernois qu'égal à celui des sujets, pour parvenir à ces huit dernières compagnies, ce peuple roi en posséderoit toujours vingt, sur vingt quatre. La proportion est honnête, si l'on fait attention qu'il y a dans le Canton près de cent mille hommes en état de porter les armes, dont il n'y en a pas huit cens, bourgeois de Berne. D'ailleurs les petits bourgeois, à qui ce nom seul inspire de la fierté, aiment mieux croupir dans la misère à Berne, que de se faire par leur travail un état vraiment respectable. Ainsi dans toutes ces troupes, je doute qu'on puisse trouver cinquante Bernois qui ne soient pas officiers.

Ces malheurs, me dites vous, ne sont que pour les gentilshommes; c'est à dire, pour la partie la plus

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Berne, and the remaining eight were left common between them and their subjects in the Païs de Vaud. On the supposition, then, that the interest of both classes of candidates for those companies is equal, the sovereign people will obtain four out of the eight, and twenty out of the whole twenty-four. This proportion appears the more unreasonable, when it is considered that in the canton there are above an hundred thousand men fit to bear arms, of whom scarcely eight hundred are citizens of Berne. Besides, the poorer classes of citizens, proud merely of this title, prefer living in idleness at Berne to honourable exertions abroad, by which they might better their condition. I doubt, therefore, whether fifty citizens of Berne, who are not officers, will be found in the whole of the Swiss Dutch troops.

These inconveniences, you will tell me, are only felt by men of family; that is to say, by the most respectable, but least numerous,

plus respectable, mais la moins nombreuse, des citoyens. Ils s'évanouissent dans ces maximes générales et égales que vous venez d'établir. La tyrannie de vos Baillis s'y évanouit elle aussi? Le peuple, nom si cher à l'humanité, en sent tout le joug. Je ne vous conterai point des histoires de leurs oppressions. Vous me chicaneriez sur la vérité des faits, et puis vous me diriez, qu'il ne faut jamais conclure du particulier au général, et vous auriez raison. Il vaut mieux faire sentir l'étendue de leur pouvoir, et laisser à votre connoissance du cœur humain, à juger de l'usage qu'ils en font. Chaque Bailli est à la fois chef de la justice, de la milice, des finances, et de la religion. Comme juge, il décide sans appel jusqu'à la somme de cent francs, somme très modique pour vous, mais qui fait la fortune d'un paysan; et il décide seul, car ses

merous, portion of the community; and they disappear amidst the general equity and impartiality of the public administration. But does the tyranny of the *bailiffs* disappear also? The people, a name so dear to humanity, feel the full weight of their oppression. I will not have recourse to particular examples; because you might call in question the authenticity of facts, or object with reason, that general conclusions are not to be drawn from particular principles. I shall be contented with pointing out the extent of their power, and leave to your own knowledge of human nature to infer the abuses with which it must be accompanied. In his own district every bailiff is at the head of religion, of the law, the army, and the finances. As judge, he decides, without appeal, all causes to the amount of an hundred franks; a sum of little importance to a gentleman, but which often makes the whole fortune of a peasant; and he decides alone, for the voice

ses assesseurs n'ont pas voix pondérative. Il donne, ou plutôt il vend, presque tous les emplois dans son bailliage. Si l'on veut appeller de ses sentences, il n'y a plus de tribunal à Moudon; il faut aller à Berne, et quel paysan veut se ruiner à la poursuite de la justice? S'il cherche encore à faire punir son tyran, il demande l'entrée en conseil. L'Avoyer l'accorde, peut-être avec beaucoup de difficulté; et à force de fatigues et de dépenses il parvient à pouvoir plaider devant un tribunal lié avec son baillif par le sang, et plus encore par une conformité de forfaits, ou d'intérêts.

Votre pays est épuisé par les impôts, tout modiques qu'ils sont. Développons cette idée. Pendant que les pays les plus riches de l'Europe s'abyment de dépenses et de dettes, et mettent en œuvre des moyens, qui feroient trembler le plus hardi dissipateur,

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voice of his assessors has not any weight in the scale. He confers, or rather he sells, all the employments in his district. When the injured party wishes to appeal from his sentence, as there is no court of justice at Moudon, he is obliged to remove the cause to Berne; and how few peasants can bear this expense? But if his eagerness to punish his tyrant carries him thither, it is not without many difficulties on his part that the Avoyer, or chief magistrate, grants him admission into the council; where, after all his trouble and expense, he is finally allowed to plead his cause before a tribunal, the members of which are connected with his oppressor by the ties of blood, and still more by a conformity of interests and crimes.

Your taxes, moderate as they are, exhaust the country. This observation requires to be explained. While the great kingdoms of Europe, loaded with expenses and debts, are driven to expedients which would alarm the wildest prodigal, Berne is the only state

sipateur, le Canton de Berne est le seul qui amasse des trésors. Le secret de l'état est si bien gardé, qu'il est difficile de le deviner. Stanian, ambassadeur d'Angleterre à Berne, qui avoit un esprit d'observation et de grandes facilités pour se bien informer, estimoit, il y a quarante ans, les sommes qu'il avoit dans les fonds publics de Londres à trois cens milles livres sterling, ou sept millions, et tout ce qui étoit resté dans le trésor de Berne, ou dispersé dans les autres banques de l'Europe, à dix huit cens mille livres sterling, ou quarante trois millions. On peut croire que ces trésors n'ont pas diminués depuis l'an 1722. Le moyen que le Canton employe pour s'enrichir est très simple. Il dépense beaucoup moins qu'il ne reçoit. Mais que reçoit il? Je l'ignore; mais je vais tâcher de le deviner. Les douze bailliages du Pays de Vaud rendent dans leurs six ans, à peu près cinq cens mille

state which has amassed a large treasure. The secret has been so well kept, that it is not easy to ascertain its amount. Stanyan, the British envoy at Berne, a man inquisitive and possessed of good means of information, estimated forty years ago the money belonging to that republic, in the English funds, at three hundred thousand pounds, or seven millions of Swiss livres; and the sums remaining in the treasury of Berne, or dispersed through the other funds or banks of Europe, at eighteen hundred thousand pounds sterling, or forty-three millions Swiss. These treasures have not probably diminished since the year 1722. The Canton enriches itself by the simple means of receiving much and expending little. But what is the amount of its receipts? I know not, but I will try to discover it. The twelve bailiwics, or districts, of the Païs de Vaud pay, one with another, during the six years that they are governed

mille livres de Suisse, les uns portant les autres. Le revenu de douze, peut donc monter à un million de livres de rente. J'ai toujours entendu dire que les Baillis prennent le dix pour cent sur les revenus du souverain. Le voilà donc ce revenu d'un million par année. En rabattant les cent mille livres des Baillis, je compterois encore cent mille écus pour les charges de l'état, ce qui n'est point une supposition bâtie en l'air. Les autres deux cens mille écus, qui, dans un autre pays, fourniroient à l'entretien d'une cour et d'une armée, dont les dépenses feroient retomber sur la terre la rosée qui en étoit tirée, vont ici s'enfouir dans les coffres du souverain, ou se disperser dans les banques publiques, et précaires de l'Europe, pour être un jour une proye à l'infidélité d'un commis, ou à l'ambition d'un conquérant. Cette perte continuelle

governed by the same magistrate, five hundred thousand Swiss livres. The contributions, therefore, of all the twelve amount to a million of livres annually. I have always been told that the bailiffs, or governors, retain ten *per cent.* on the revenues raised within their respective jurisdictions. The million of revenue, diminished by an hundred thousand livres consumed in the appointments of the *bailiffs*, is reduced to three hundred thousand crowns; of which one hundred thousand may be allowed for the expenses of the state, a sum not chosen at random; and the other two hundred thousand crowns, which in other countries would be employed in the maintenance of a court and army, whose incomes would circulate through the general mass of the people on whom they had been raised, are here buried in the coffers of the sovereignty, or dispersed through the precarious banks of Europe, to become one day a prey to the knavery of a clerk, or the ambition of

tinuelle des espèces éteint l'industrie, empêche tout effort, qui ne se peut faire sans argent, et appauvrit insensiblement le pays.

Tels sont vos maux, Monsieur. Eh bien! me repondez vous, n'avez vous sondé nos playes que pour en aigrir la douleur? Quel conseil nous donnez vous? Aucun, si vous ne m'avez pas déjà prévenu. Il y a une voye que je puis vous conseiller, c'est celle de la remontrance. Mais il y a des maux tellement enracinés dans la constitution d'un état, que Platon lui même n'eût pas espéré du succès pour une pareille députation. Ne tiendroit ils pas contre les remontrances, eux qui ont pu tenir contre deux cens ans de fidélité et de services? Il y a un autre remède plus prompt, plus entier, plus glorieux: Guillaume Tell vous l'eût conseillé; mais je ne vous le conseille point. Je sais que l'esprit du citoyen, comme celui de la charité, souffre

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of a conqueror. This continual absorption of specie extinguishes industry, deadens every enterprise that requires the aid of money, and gradually impoverishes the country.

These, Sir, are your hardships. But I think you will say to me, "Have you thus probed our wounds merely to make us feel their smart? What advice do you give us?" None, unless you have already anticipated it. I would indeed advise you to remonstrate. But there are evils so deeply rooted in governments, that Plato himself would despair of curing them. What could you expect to obtain from those masters by remonstrances, who have remained during two centuries insensible to the merit of your faithful service? There is another remedy, more prompt, more perfect, and more glorious. William Tell would have prescribed it; I do not. I know that the spirit of a good citizen is, like that of charity, long-suffering, and hoping all things. The citizen is in the

souffre beaucoup, et espère longtems. Il a raison. Il connoit les malheurs attachés à la soumission. Il ignore ceux que la résistance pourroit entrainer. Vous, qui me connoissez, Monsieur, vous savez combien je respecte ces principes amis de la paix et des hommes. Tribun séditieux, je ne chercherai jamais à faire secouer au peuple le joug de l'autorité, pour le conduire du murmure, à la sédition; de la sédition, à l'anarchie; et de l'anarchie, peut-être, au despotisme.

Cependant avec la franchise, qui a partout conduit ma plume, je vais détruire quelques monstres de romans, qui vous peuvent effrayer. Que vous préfériez le parti de l'enterprise ou celui du repos, je voudrois que ce fût la raison, et non le préjugé, qui vous dictât ce parti.

Les Bernois ont les droits sur votre obéissance; vous craignez de leur faire une injustice en la retirant.

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the right; since he knows the evils resulting from his submission, but knows not the greater evils which might be produced by his resistance. You know me too well to be ignorant how much I respect those principles, so friendly to the interests of peace and of human kind. I will never, in the language of a seditious tribune, persuade the people to shake off the yoke of authority, that they may proceed from murmur to sedition, from sedition to anarchy, and from anarchy perhaps to despotism.

Yet, with the freedom which has hitherto guided my pen, I will endeavour to destroy some giants of romance, which might otherwise inspire you with vain terror. Whether you prefer the road of bold enterprise or cautious repose, I wish that reason, not prejudice, should dictate your choice.

The magistrates of Berne have a right to expect your obedience; you fear to do them wrong in withholding it.

N° X.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mrs.* PORTEN.

DEAR MADAM, Lausanne, 1756.

FEAR no reproaches for your negligence, however great; for your silence, however long. I love you too well to make you any. Nothing, in my opinion, is so ridiculous as some kind of friends, wives, and lovers, who look on no crime as so heinous as the letting slip a post without writing. The charm of friendship is liberty; and he that would destroy the one, destroys, without designing it, the better half of the other. I compare friendship to charity, and letters to alms; the last signifies nothing without the first, and very often the first is very strong, although it does not shew itself by the other. It is not good-will which is wanting, it is only opportunities or means. However, one month—two months—three months—four months—I began not to be angry, but to be uneasy, for fear some accident had happened to you. I was often on the point of writing, but was always stopped by the hopes of hearing from you the next post. Besides, not to flatter you, your excuse is a very bad one. *You cannot entertain me by your letters.* I think I ought to know that better than you; and I assure you that one of *your plain sincere letters* entertains me more than the most polished one of Pliny or Cicero. 'Tis your heart speaks, and I look on your heart as much better in its way than either of their heads.

Out of pure politeness I ought to talk of * * * * * * * * before myself. I was some hours with him in this place, that is to say, almost all the time he was here. I find him always * * * * * * * * * , always good-natured, always amusing, and always trifling. I asked him some questions about Italy; he told me, he hurried out of it as soon as he could, because there was no French comedy, and he did not love the Italian opera. I let slip some words of the pleasure he would have of seeing his native country again, on account of the services he could render her in parliament. "Yes, (says he,) I want vastly to be at London; there are three years since I have seen Garrick." He spoke to me of you, and indeed not only with consideration, but with affection. Were there nothing else valuable in his character, I should love him, because he loves you. He told me he intended to see you as soon as he should be in England; I am glad he has kept his word. I was so taken up with my old friend, that I could not speak a word to * * * * * *. He appeared, however, a good, sensible, modest young man. Poor Minorca indeed thus lost! but poor Englishmen who have lost it! I think the second exclamation still stronger than the first. Poor Lord Torrington! I can't help pitying him. What a shameful uncle he has! I shall lose all my opinion of my countrymen, if the whole nation, Whigs, Tories, Courtiers, Jacobites, &c. &c. &c. are not unanimous in detesting that man. Pray is there any truth in a story we had here, of a brother

ther of Admiral Byng's having killed himself out of rage and shame? I did not think he had any brothers alive. It is thought here that Byng will be acquitted. I hope not. Though I do not love rash judgments, I cannot help thinking him guilty.

You ask me, when I shall come into England? How should I know it? The 14th of June I wrote to my father, and saying nothing of my return, which I knew would have been to no purpose, I desired him to give me a fixed allowance of 200*l.* a-year, or, at least, to allow me a servant. No answer. About a fortnight ago I renewed my request; and I cannot yet know what will be my success. I design to make a virtue of necessity, to keep quiet during this winter, and to put in use all my machines next spring, in order to come over.* I shall write the strongest, and at the same time the most dutiful letter I can imagine to my father. If all that produces no effect, I don't know what I can do.

You talk to me of my cousin Ellison's wedding; but you don't say a word of who she is married to. Is it Elliot? Though you have not seen my father yet, I suppose you have heard of him. How was he in town? His wife, was she with him? Has marriage produced any changement in his way of living? Is he to be always at Beriton, or will he come up to London in winter? Pray have you

* This Letter is a curious specimen of the degree in which Mr. Gibbon had lost the English language in a short time,

ever seen my mother-in-law, or heard any thing more of her character? Compliments to every body that makes me compliments: to the Gilberts, to the Comarques, to Lord Nuncham, &c. When you see the Comarques again, ask them if they did not know, at Putney, Monsieur la Vabre, and his daughters; perhaps you know them yourself. I saw them lately in this country; one of them very well married.

The Englishman who lodges in our house, is little sociable, at least for a reasonable person. My health always good, my studies pretty good. I understand Greek pretty well. I have even some kind of correspondence with several learned men, with Mr. Crevier of Paris, with Mr. Breitinger of Zurich, and with Mr. Allamand, a clergyman of this country, the most reasonable divine I ever knew. Do you never read now? I am a little piqued that you say nothing of Sir Charles Grandison; if you have not read it yet, read it for my sake. Perhaps Clarissa does not encourage you; but, in my opinion, it is much superior to Clarissa. When you have read it, read the letters of Madame de Sevigné to her daughter; I don't doubt of their being translated into English. They are properly what I called in the beginning of my letter, letters of the heart; the natural expressions of a mother's fondness; regret at their being at a great distance from one another, and continual schemes to get together again. All that, won't it please you? There is scarce any thing else in six whole volumes: and notwithstanding that, few people read

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them without finding them too short. Adieu: my paper is at an end. I don't dare to tell you to write soon. Do it, however, if you can. Your's affectionately,

E. GIBBON.

N° XI.

Rev. Dr. WALDGRAVE* *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. junior.*

Washington, near Storrington,
DEAR SIR, Dec. 7, 1758.

I HAVE read nothing for some time (and I keep reading on still) that has given me so much pleasure as your letter, which I received by the last post. I rejoice at your return to your country, to your father, and to the good principles of truth and reason. Had I in the least suspected your design of leaving us, I should immediately have put you upon reading Mr. Chillingworth's Religion of Protestants; any one page of which is worth a library of Swiss divinity. It will give me great pleasure to see you at Washington; where I am, I thank God, very well and very happy. I desire my respects to Mr. Gibbon; and am, with very great regard, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate humble servant,

THO. WALDGRAVE.

* Tutor to Mr. Gibbon when he first went to Magdalen College, Oxford. S.

N° XII.

Mr. GIBBON *to his* FATHER.

DEAR SIR, 1760.

AN address in writing, from a person who has the pleasure of being with you every day, may appear singular. However, I have preferred this method, as upon paper I can speak without a blush, and be heard without interruption. If my letter displeases you, impute it, dear Sir, only to yourself. You have treated me, not like a son, but like a friend. Can you be surprised that I should communicate to a friend, all my thoughts, and all my desires? Unless the friend approve them, let the father never know them; or at least, let him know at the same time, that however reasonable, however eligible, my scheme may appear to me, I would rather forget it for ever, than cause him the slightest uneasiness.

When I first returned to England, attentive to my future interest, you were so good as to give me hopes of a seat in parliament. This seat, it was supposed, would be an expense of fifteen hundred pounds. This design flattered my vanity, as it might enable me to shine in so august an assembly. It flattered a nobler passion; I promised myself that by the means of this seat I might be one day the instrument of some good to my country. But I soon perceived how little a mere virtuous inclination, unassisted by talents, could contribute towards

towards that great end; and a very short examination discovered to me, that those talents had not fallen to my lot. Do not, dear Sir, impute this declaration to a false modesty, the meanest species of pride. Whatever else I may be ignorant of, I think I know myself, and shall always endeavour to mention my good qualities without vanity, and my defects without repugnance. I shall say nothing of the most intimate acquaintance with his country and language, so absolutely necessary to every senator. Since they may be acquired, to allege my deficiency in them, would seem only the plea of laziness. But I shall say with great truth, that I never possessed that gift of speech, the first requisite of an orator, which use and labour may improve, but which nature alone can bestow. That my temper, quiet, retired, somewhat reserved, could neither acquire popularity, bear up against opposition, nor mix with ease in the crowds of public life. That even my genius (if you will allow me any) is better qualified for the deliberate compositions of the closet, than for the extemporary discourses of the parliament. An unexpected objection would disconcert me; and as I am incapable of explaining to others, what I do not thoroughly understand myself, I should be meditating while I ought to be answering. I even want necessary prejudices of party, and of nation. In popular assemblies, it is often necessary to inspire them; and never orator inspired well a passion, which he did not feel himself. Suppose me even mistaken in my own character; to set out with

the repugnance such an opinion must produce, offers but an indifferent prospect. But I hear you say, it is not necessary that every man should enter into parliament with such exalted hopes. It is to acquire a title the most glorious of any in a free country, and to employ the weight and consideration it gives, in the service of one's friends. Such motives, though not glorious, yet are not dishonourable; and if we had a borough in our command, if you could bring me in without any great expense, or if our fortune enabled us to despise that expense, then indeed I should think them of the greatest strength. But with our private fortune, is it worth while to purchase at so high a rate, a title, honourable in itself, but which I must share with every fellow that can lay out fifteen hundred pounds? Besides, dear Sir, a merchandise is of little value to the owner, when he is resolved not to sell it.

I should affront your penetration, did I not suppose you now see the drift of this letter. It is to appropriate to another use the sum with which you destined to bring me into parliament; to employ it, not in making me great, but in rendering me happy. I have often heard you say yourself, that the allowance you had been so indulgent as to grant me, though very liberal in regard to your estate, was yet but small, when compared with the almost necessary extravagancies of the age. I have indeed found it so, notwithstanding a good deal of economy, and an exemption from many of the common expenses of youth. This, dear Sir, would be a way of supplying these deficiencies,

ciencies, without any additional expense to you. But I forbear. If you think my proposals reasonable, you want no entreaties to engage you to comply with them; if otherwise, all will be without effect.

All that I am afraid of, dear Sir, is, that I should seem not so much asking a favour, as this really is, as exacting a debt. After all I can say, you will still remain the best judge of my good, and your own circumstances. Perhaps, like most landed gentlemen, an addition to my annuity would suit you better, than a sum of money given at once; perhaps the sum itself may be too considerable. Whatever you shall think proper to bestow upon me, or in whatever manner, will be received with equal gratitude.

I intended to stop here; but as I abhor the least appearance of art, I think it will be better to lay open my whole scheme at once. The unhappy war which now desolates Europe, will oblige me to defer seeing France till a peace. But that reason can have no influence upon Italy, a country which every scholar must long to see; should you grant my request, and not disapprove of my manner of employing your bounty, I would leave England this autumn, and pass the winter at Lausanne with M. de Voltaire and my old friends. The armies no longer obstruct my passage, and it must be indifferent to you, whether I am at Lausanne or at London during the winter, since I shall not be at Beriton. In the spring I would cross the Alps, and after some stay in Italy, as the war must then

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be terminated, return home through France; to live happily with you and my dear mother. I am now two-and-twenty; a tour must take up a considerable time, and though I believe you have no thoughts of settling me soon, (and I am sure I have not,) yet so many things may intervene, that the man who does not travel early, runs a great risk of not travelling at all. But this part of my scheme, as well as the whole, I submit entirely to you.

Permit me, dear Sir, to add, that I do not know whether the complete compliance with my wishes could increase my love and gratitude; but that I am very sure, no refusal could diminish those sentiments with which I shall always remain, dear Sir,

Your most dutiful and obedient son and servant,

E. GIBBON, junior.

N°. XIII.

Mr. MALLET *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, 1761.

I COULD not procure you a ticket for the coronation, without putting you to the expense of ten guineas. But I now send you something much more valuable, which will cost you only a groat. When will your father or you be in town? Desire Becket to send me one of your books, well bound, for myself: all the other copies I gave away, as Duke Desenany drunk out ten dozen of Lord Bolingbroke's

Bolingbroke's Champagne in his absence—to your honour and glory. I need not tell you that I am,

most affectionately,
the Major's and your
very humble servant,
D. MALLET.

Turn over, read, and be delighted.
Let your father too read.

J'AI lu avec autant d'avidité que de satisfaction le bon et agréable ouvrage, dont l'auteur m'a fait présent. Je parle comme si M. Gibbon ne m'avoit pas loué, et même un peu trop fort. J'ai lu le livre d'un citoyen du monde, d'un véritable homme de lettres, qui les aime pour elles mêmes, sans exception ni prévention, et qui joint à beaucoup d'esprit, le bon sens plus rare que l'esprit, ainsi qu'une impartialité qui le rend juste et modeste, malgré l'impression qu'il a dû recevoir des auteurs sans nombre qu'il a lus, et très bien lus. J'ai donc dévoré ce petit ouvrage, auquel je desirerois de bon cœur

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I READ with as much eagerness as pleasure the excellent and agreeable work with which the author presented me. I speak as if Mr. Gibbon had not praised me, and that too warmly. His work is that of a real man of letters, who loves them for their own sake, without exception or prejudice; and who unites with much talent the more precious gift of good sense, and an impartiality that displays his candour and justice, in spite of the bias that he must have received from the innumerable authors whom he has read and studied. I have therefore perused, with the greatest avidity,

cœur une plus grande étendue, et que je voudrois faire lire à tout le monde.

Je témoigne aussi à My Lady Hervey, l'obligation que je lui ai, de m'avoir fait connoître un auteur qui prouve à chaque mot, que la littérature n'est ennemie que de l'ignorance et des travers, qui mérite d'avoir des Maty pour amis, et qui d'ailleurs honore et fortifie notre langue par l'usage que son esprit en sait faire. Si j'étois plus savant, j'appuyerois sur le mérite des discussions, et sur la justesse des observations.

CAYLUS.

N° XIV.

GEO. LEWIS SCOTT, *Esquire*,* *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *junior*.

SUPPOSING you settled in quarters, dear Sir, I obey your commands, and send you my thoughts, relating to the pursuit of your mathematical stu-

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avidity, this little work; and wish that it was more extensive, and read universally.

I would also express my thanks to Lady Hervey, for making me acquainted with an author who proves in every page that learning is hostile only to ignorance and prejudice; who deserves to have a Maty for his friend, and who adds honour and strength to our language by the use which he so ably makes of it. Were I more learned I should dwell on the merit of the discussions, and the justness of the observations.

* A very able mathematician.

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dies. You told me, you had read Clairaut's Algebra, and the three first books of l'Hopital's Conic Sections. You did not mention the Elements of Geometry you had perused. Whatever they were, whether Euclid's, or by some other, you will do well, if you have not applied yourself that way for some time past, to go over them again, and render the conclusions familiar to your memory. You may defer, however, a very critical inquiry into the principles and reasoning of geometers, till Dr. Simson's new edition of Euclid (now in the press) appears. I would have you study that book well; in the mean time recapitulate Clairaut and l'Hopital, so far as you have gone, and then go through the remainder of the Marquis's books with care. The fifth book will be an Introduction to the "*Analyse des Infiniment petits*;" to which I would advise you to proceed, after finishing the Conic Sections. The *Infiniment petits* may want a comment; Crousaz has written one, but it is a wretched performance: he did not understand the first principles of the science he undertook to illustrate; and his geometry shews, that he did not understand the first principles of geometry. There is a posthumous work of M. Varignon's, called *Eclaircissemens sur l'Analyse des Infiniment petits.* Paris, 1725, 4to. This will be often of use to you. However, it must be owned, that the notion of the *Infiniment petits*, or *Infinitesimals*, as we call them, is too bold an assumption, and too remote from the principles of the ancients, our masters in geometry;

and

and has given a handle to an ingenious author (Berkeley, late Bishop of Cloyne) to attack the logic of modern mathematicians. He has been answered by many, but by none so clearly as by Mr. Maclaurin, in his Fluxions, (2 vols. in 4to.) where you will meet with a collection of the most valuable discoveries in the mathematical and physico-mathematical sciences. I recommend this author to you; but whether you ought to read him immediately after M. de l'Hopital, may be a question. I think you may be satisfied at first with reading his introduction, and chap. 1. book I. of the grounds of the Method of Fluxions, and then proceed to chap. 12. of the same book, § 495 to § 505 inclusive, where he treats of the Method of Infinitesimals, and of the Limits of Ratios. You may then read chap. 1. book II. § 697 to § 714 inclusive; and this you may do immediately after reading the first section of the *Analyse des Infiniment petits*: or if you please, you may postpone a critical inquiry into the principles of Infinitesimals and Fluxions, till you have seen the use and application of this doctrine in the drawing of Tangents, and in finding the Maxima and Minima of Geometrical Magnitudes. *Annal. des Infin. pet.* § 2 *and* 3.

When you have read the beginning of l'Hopital's 4th sect. to sect. 65 inclusive, you may read Maclaurin's chap. 2, 3, and 4; where he fully explains the nature of these higher orders of Fluxions, and applies the notion to geometrical figures. Your principles

principles being then firmly established, you may finish M. de l'Hopital.

Your next step must be to the inverse method of Fluxions, called by the French *calcul intégral.* Monsieur de Bougainville has given us a treatise upon this subject, Paris, 1754, 4to. under the title *Traité du Calcul intégral pour servir de suite à l'Analyse des Infiniment petits.* You should have it; but though he explains the methods hitherto found out for the determination of Fluents from given Fluxions, or in the French style, *pour trouver les intégrales des différences donnees;* yet as he has not shewn the use and application of this doctrine, as de l'Hopital did, with respect to that part which he treats of, M. de Bougainville's book is, for that reason, not so well suited to beginners as could be wished. You may therefore take Carré's book in 4to, printed at Paris, 1700, and entitled *Méthode pour la Mesure des Surfaces,* &c. *par l'Application du Calcul intégral.* Only I must caution you against depending upon him in his fourth section, where he treats of the centre of oscillation and percussion; he having made several mistakes there, as M. de Mairan has shewn, p. 196. *Mem. de l'Acad. Royale des Sciences,* édit. Paris, 1735. After Carré, you may read Bougainville.

I have recommended French authors to you, because you are a thorough master of that language, and because, by their studying style and clearness of expression, they seem to me best adapted to beginners. Our authors are often profound and acute,

acute, but their laconisms, and neglect of expression, often perplex beginners. I except Mr. Maclaurin, who is very clear; but then he has such a vast variety of matter, that a great part of his book is, on that account, too difficult for a beginner. I might recommend other authors to you, as a course of elements; for instance, you might read Mr. Thomas Simpson's Geometry, Algebra, Trigonometry, and Fluxions; all which contain a great variety of good things. In his Geometry he departs from Euclid without a sufficient reason. However, you may read him after Dr. Robert Simson's Euclid, or together with it, and take notice of what is new in Thomas Simpson. His Algebra you may join with Clairaut; and the rather that Clairaut has been sparing of particular problems, and has, besides, omitted several useful applications of Algebra. Simpson's Fluxions may go hand in hand with l'Hopital, Maclaurin, Carré, and Bougainville. If you come to have a competent knowledge of these authors, you will be far advanced, and you may proceed to the works of Newton, Cotes, the Bernoulli's, Dr. Moivre, &c. as your inclination and time will permit. Sir Isaac Newton's treatise of the Quadrature of Curves has been well commented by Mr. Stewart, and is of itself a good institution of Fluxions. Sir Isaac's Algebra is commented in several places by Clairaut, and in more in Maclaurin's Algebra; and Newton's famous Principia are explained by the *Minims Jacquirs et le Seur*, Geneva, 4 vols. 4to. Cotes is explained

explained by Don Walmesley, in his *Analyse des Mesures*, &c. Paris, 4to. You see you may find work enough. But my paper bids me subscribe myself, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

GEO. LEWIS SCOTT.

Leicester Square, May 7, 1762.

P. S. But I recollect, a little late, that the books I have mentioned, excepting Newton's Principia, and the occasional problems in the rest, treat only of the abstract parts of the Mathematics; and you are, no doubt, willing to look into the concrete parts, or what is called Mixed Mathematics, and the Physico-mathematical Sciences. Of these the principal are, mechanics, optics, and astronomy. As to the principles of mechanics, M. d'Alembert has recommended M. Trabaud's *Principes du Mouvement et de l'Equilibre*, to beginners; and you cannot do better than to study this book. In optics we have Dr. Smith's complete System, 2 vols. 4to. I wish though, we had a good institution, short and clear; the Doctor's book entering into too great details for beginners. However, you may consider his first book, or popular Treatise, as an Institution, and you will from thence acquire a good deal of knowledge. In astronomy I recommend M. le Monnier's *Institutions Astronomiques*, in 4to. Paris, 1746. It is a translation from Keil's Astronomical Lectures, but with considerable additions. You should also have Cassini's *Elémens d' Astronomie*, 2 vols. 4to. As to the physical

causes of the celestial motions, after having read Maclaurin's account of Sir Isaac Newton's philosophical Discoveries, and Dr. Pemberton's View of Sir Isaac's Philosophy, you may read the great author himself, with the comment. But if you read Maclaurin's Fluxions throughout, you will find many points of Sir Isaac's philosophy well explained there. The theory of light and colours should be studied in Sir Isaac himself, in the English edition of his Optics, 8vo. there is a branch of the optical sciences which I have not mentioned, that is, Perspective. Dr. Brook Taylor's is the best system, but his style and expression are embarrassed and obscure. L'Abbé de la Caille has also given a good treatise of Perspective, at the end of his *Optique:* these are of use to painters; but the theory of mathematical projection in general is more extensive, and has been well treated of by old writers, Clavius, Aguillonius, Tacquet, and. De Chules: and lately M. de la Caille has given a memoir among those of the *Acad. Roy. des Sciences* of Paris, *anno* 1741, *sur le calcul des projections en général.* This subject is necessary for the understanding of the theory of maps and planispheres. Mathematicians have also applied their art to the theory of sounds and music. Dr. Smith's Harmonics is the principal book of the kind.

Thus have I given you some account of the principal elementary authors in the different branches of mathematical knowledge, and it were much to be wished that we had a complete institution, or course, of all these things of a moderate size,

size, which might serve as an introduction to all the good original authors. Wolfius attempted this; his intention was laudable, but his book is so full of errors of the press, besides some of his own, that I cannot recommend him to a beginner. He might be used occasionally for the signification of terms, and for many historical facts relating to mathematics; and, besides, may be considered as a collector of problems, which is useful.

Besides the books I have mentioned, it might be of use to you to have M. Montucla's *Histoire des Mathématiques*, in 4to. 2 vols. You will there find a history of the progress of the mathematical sciences, and some account of the principal authors relating to this subject.

I mentioned to you in conversation, the superior elegance of the ancient method of demonstration. If you incline to examine this point, after being well versed in Euclid, you may proceed to Dr. Simson's Conic Sections; and to form an idea of the ancient analysis or method of investigating the solution of geometrical problems, read Euclid's Data, which Dr. Simson will publish, together with his new edition of Euclid; and then read his *Loci Plani*, in 4to. The elegance of the method of the ancients is confessed; but it seems to require the remembrance of a great multitude of propositions, and in complicated problems it does not seem probable that it can be extended so far as the algebraic method.

N° XV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esquire, to Mrs.* GIBBON, Beriton.

DEAR MADAM, Paris, February the 12th, 1763.

You remember our agreement,—short and frequent letters. The first part of the treaty you have no doubt of my observing. I think I ought not to leave you any of the second. *A propos* of treaty: our definitive one was signed here yesterday, and this morning the Duke of Bridgewater and Mr. Neville went for London with the news of it. The plenipotentiaries sat up till ten o'clock in the morning at the ambassador of Spain's ball, and then went to sign this treaty, which regulates the fate of Europe.

Paris, in most respects, has fully answered my expectations. I have a number of very good acquaintance, which increase every day; for nothing is so easy as the making them here. Instead of complaining of the want of them, I begin already to think of making a choice. Next Sunday, for instance, I have only three invitations to dinner. Either in the houses you are already acquainted, you meet with people who ask you to come and see them, or some of your friends offer themselves to introduce you. When I speak of these connections, I mean chiefly for dinner and the evening. Suppers, as yet, I am pretty much a stranger to, and I fancy shall continue so; for Paris is divided into two species, who have but little communication

tion with each other. The one, who is chiefly connected with the men of letters, dine very much at home, are glad to see their friends, and pass the evenings till about nine, in agreeable and rational conversation. The others are the most fashionable, sup in numerous parties, and always play, or rather game, both before and after supper. You may easily guess which sort suits me best. Indeed, Madam, we may say what we please of the frivolity of the French, but I do assure you, that in a fortnight passed at Paris, I have heard more conversation worth remembering, and seen more men of letters among the people of fashion, than I had done in two or three winters in London.

Amongst my acquaintance I cannot help mentioning M. Helvetius, the author of the famous book *de l'Esprit*. I met him at dinner at Madame Geoffrin's, where he took great notice of me, made me a visit next day, has ever since treated me, not in a polite but a friendly manner. Besides being a sensible man, an agreeable companion, and the worthiest creature in the world, he has a very pretty wife, an hundred thousand livres a year, and one of the best tables in Paris. The only thing I dislike in him is his great attachment to, and admiration for, * * * *, whose character is indeed at Paris beyond any thing you can conceive. To the great civility of this foreigner, who was not obliged to take the least notice of me, I must just contrast the behaviour of * * * * * *

N° XVI.

Mr. GIBBON *to his* FATHER.

DEAR SIR, Paris, February 24, 1763.

I HAVE now passed nearly a month in this place, and I can say with truth, that it has answered my most sanguine expectations. The buildings of every kind, the libraries, the public diversions, take up a great part of my time; and I have already found several houses, where it is both very easy and very agreeable to be acquainted. Lady Hervey's recommendation to Madame Geoffrin was a most excellent one. Her house is a very good one; regular dinners there every Wednesday, and the best company of Paris, in men of letters and people of fashion. It was at her house I connected myself with M. Helvetius, who, from his heart, his head, and his fortune, is a most valuable man.

At his house I was introduced to the Baron d'Olbach, who is a man of parts and fortune, and has two dinners every week. The other houses I am known in, are the Duchess d'Aiguillon's, Madame la Comtesse de Froulay's, Madame du Bocage, Madame Boyer, M. le Marquis de Mirabeau, and M. de Forcemagne. All these people have their different merit; in some I meet with good dinners; in others, societies for the evening; and in all, good sense, entertainment, and civility; which, as I have no favours to ask, or business to transact with them, is sufficient for me. Their men of letters

ters are as affable and communicative as I expected. My letters to them did me no harm, but were very little necessary. My book had been of great service to me, and the compliments I have received upon it would make me insufferably vain, if I laid any stress on them. When I take notice of the civilities I have received, I must take notice too of what I have seen of a contrary behaviour. You know how much I always built upon the Count de Caylus: he has not been of the least use to me. With great difficulty I have seen him, and that is all. I do not, however, attribute his behaviour to pride, or dislike to me, but solely to the man's general character, which seems to be a very odd one. De la Motte, Mrs. Mallet's friend, has behaved very drily to me, though I have dined with him twice. But I can forgive him a great deal, in consideration of his having introduced me to M. d'Augny (Mrs. Mallet's son). Her men are generally angels or devils; but here I really think, without being very prone to admiration, that she has said very little too much of him. As far as I can judge, he has certainly an uncommon degree of understanding and knowledge, and, I believe, a great fund of honour and probity. We are very much together, and I think our intimacy seems to be growing into a friendship. Next Sunday we go to Versailles; the king's guard is done by a detachment from Paris, which is relieved every four days; and as he goes upon this command, it is a very good occasion for me to see the palace. I shall

not neglect, at the same time, the opportunity of informing myself of the French discipline.

The great news at present is the arrival of a very extraordinary person from the Isle of France in the East Indies. An obscure Frenchman, who was lately come into the island, being very ill, and given over, said, that before he died he must discharge his conscience of a great burden he had upon it, and declared to several people, he was the accomplice of Damien, and the very person who held the horses. Unluckily for him, the man recovered after this declaration, was immediately sent prisoner to Paris, and is just landed at Port l'Orient, from whence he is daily expected here, to unravel the whole mystery of that dark affair. This story (which at first was laughed at) has now gained entire credit, and I apprehend must be founded on real fact.

I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON.

N° XVII.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mr.* HOLROYD *at* Lausanne.

Boromean Islands, May 16th, 1764.

DEAR HOLROYD,

HURRY of running about, time taken up with seeing places, &c. &c. &c. are excellent excuses; but I fancy you will guess that my laziness and aversion to writing to my best friend are the real motives, and I am afraid you will have guessed right.

We

We are at this minute in a most magnificent palace, in the middle of a vast lake; ranging about suites of rooms without a soul to interrupt us, and secluded from the rest of the universe. We shall sit down in a moment to supper, attended by all the Count's household. This is the fine side of the medal: turn to the reverse. We are got here wet to the skin; we have crawled about fine gardens which rain and fogs prevented our seeing; and if to-morrow does not hold up a little better, we shall be in some doubt whether we can say we have seen these famous islands. Guise says yes, and I say no. The Count is not here; we have our supper from a paltry hedge alehouse, (excuse the bull,) and the servants have offered us beds in the palace, pursuant to their master's directions.

I hardly think you will like Turin; the court is old and dull; and in that country every one follows the example of the court. The principal amusement seems to be, driving about in your coach in the evening, and bowing to the people you meet. If you go while the Royal Family is there, you have the additional pleasure of stopping to salute them every time they pass. I had that advantage fifteen times one afternoon. We were presented to a lady who keeps a public assembly, and a very mournful one it is; the few women that go to it are each taken up by their cicisbeo; and a poor Englishman, who can neither talk Piedmontois nor play at Faro, stands by himself without one of their haughty nobility doing him the honour of speaking to him. You must not attribute

bute this account to our not having staid long enough to form connections. It is a general complaint of our countrymen, except of Lord * * * * who has been engaged for about two years in the service of a lady, whose long nose is her most distinguishing fine feature. The most sociable women I have met with are the king's daughters. I chatted for about a quarter of an hour with them, talked about Lausanne, and grew so very free and easy, that I drew my snuff-box, rapped it, took snuff twice, (a crime never known before in the presence chamber,) and continued my discourse in my usual attitude of my body bent forwards, and my fore finger stretched out.* As it might however have been difficult to keep up this acquaintance, I chiefly employed my time in seeing places, which fully repaid me in pleasure the trouble of my journey. What entertained me the most, was the museum and the citadel. The first is under the care of a M. Bartoli, who received us, without any introduction, in the politest manner in the world, and was of the greatest service to us, as I dare say he will be to you. The citadel is a stupendous work; and when you have seen the sub-

* This attitude continued to be characteristic of Mr. Gibbon, and an engraved representation of it was annexed to the first Edition of these Memoirs; but having been considered by several persons as a very unfavourable likeness, (which it undoubtedly is,) and rather as a caricature of Mr. Gibbon, it is now omitted: it is, however, certain, that Mr. Gibbon did not consider it in that light: he gave it to me himself. In its place is substituted an Engraving of the best likeness that exists of Mr. Gibbon. S.

terraneous

terraneous part of it, you will scarcely think it possible such a place can ever be taken. As it is however a regular one, it does not pique my curiosity so much as those irregular fortifications hewn out of the Alps, as Exiles, Fenestrelles, and the Brunette would have done, could we have spared the time necessary. Our next stage from Turin was Milan, where we were mere spectators, as it was not worth while to endeavour at forming connections for so very few days. I think you will be surprised at the great church, but infinitely more so at the regiment of Baden, which is in the citadel. Such steadiness, such alertness in the men, and such exactness in the officers, as exceeded all my expectations. Next Friday I shall see the regiment reviewed by General Serbelloni. Perhaps I may write a particular letter about it. From Milan we proceed to Genoa, and thence to Florence. You stare—But really we find it so inconvenient to travel like mutes, and to lose a number of curious things for want of being able to assist our eyes with our tongues, that we have resumed our original plan, and leave Venice for next year. I think I should advise you to do the same.

Milan, May 18th, 1764.

The next morning was not fair, but however we were able to take a view of the islands, which, by the help of some imagination, we conclude to be a very delightful, though not an enchanted place. I would certainly advise you to go there from Milan,

lan, which you may very well perform in a day and a half. Upon our return, we found Lord Tilney and some other English in their way to Venice. We heard a melancholy piece of news from them: Byng died at Bologna a few days ago of a fever. I am sure you will be all very sorry to hear it.

We expect a volume of news from you in relation to Lausanne, and in particular to the alliance of the Duchess with the Frog. Is it already concluded? How does the bride look after her great revolution? Pray embrace her and the adorable, if you can, in both our names; and assure them, as well as all the *Spring*,* that we talk of them very often, but particularly of a Sunday; and that we are so disconsolate, that we have neither of us commenced cicisbeos as yet, whatever we may do at Florence. We have drank the Duchess's health, not forgetting the little woman, on the top of Mount Cenis, in the middle of the Lago Maggiore, &c. &c. I expect some account of the said little woman. Who is my successor? I think Montagny had begun to supplant me before I went. I expect your answer at Florence, and your person at Rome; which the Lord grant. Amen.

* The society of young ladies mentioned in the Memoirs.

N° XVIII.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mr.* HOLROYD *at* Berlin.

DEAR HOLROYD, Beriton, Oct. 31, 1765.

WHY did I not leave a letter for you at Marseilles? For a very plain reason: because I did not go to Marseilles. But, as you have most judiciously added, why did not I send one? Humph. I own that nonplusses me a little. However, hearken to my history. After revolving a variety of plans, and suiting them as well as possible to time and finances, Guise and I at last agreed to pass from Venice to Lyons, swim down the Rhone, wheel round the south of France, and embark at Bourdeaux. Alas! At Lyons I received letters which convinced me that I ought no longer to deprive my country of one of her greatest ornaments. Unwillingly I obeyed, left Guise to execute alone the remainder of our plan, passed about ten delicious days at Paris, and arrived in England about the end of June. Guise followed me about two months afterwards, as I was informed by an epistle from him, which, to his great astonishment, I immediately answered. You perceive there is still some virtue amongst men. *Exempli gratiâ*, your letter is dated Vienna, October 12th, 1765; it made its appearance at Beriton, Wednesday evening, October 29th. I am at this present writing, sitting in my library, on Thursday morning, between the hours of twelve and one. I have ventured to suppose you still at Berlin; if not, I presume

presume you take care that your letters sho
follow you. This ideal march to Berlin is
only one I can make at present. I am under c
mand: and were I to talk of a third sally as ye
know some certain people who would think it
as ridiculous as the third sally of the renow
Don Quixote. All I ever hoped for was, to
able to take the field once more, after lying q
a couple of years. I must own that your execut
your tour in so complete a manner gives me a li
selfish spleen. If I make a summer's escape
Berlin, I cannot hope for the companion I
tered myself with. I am sorry however I h
said so much; but as it is difficult to increase y
Honour's proper notions of your own perfectic
I will e'en let it stand. Indeed I owed you so
thing for your account of the favourable recept
my book has met with. I see there are people
taste at Vienna, and no longer wonder at y
liking it. Since the court is so agreeable, a t
rough reformation must have taken place. T
stiffness of the Austrian etiquette, and the haug
magnificence of the Hungarian princes, must h
given way to more civilized notions. You h
(no doubt) informed yourself of the forces and
venues of the empress. I think (however
fashionably) we always esteemed her. Have y
lost or improved that opinion? Princes, like p
tures, to be admired, must be seen in their pro
point of view, which is often a pretty dist
one. I am afraid you will find it peculiarly so
Berlin.

I ne

I need not desire you to pay a most minute attention to the Austrian and Prussian discipline. You have been bit by a mad serjeant as well as myself; and when we meet, we shall run over every particular which we can approve, blame, or imitate. Since my arrival, I have assumed the august character of Major, received returns, issued orders, &c. &c. &c. I do not intend you shall have the honour of reviewing my troops next summer. Three fourths of the men will be recruits; and during my pilgrimage, discipline seems to have been relaxed. But I summon you to fulfil another engagement. Make me a visit next summer. You will find here a bad house, a pleasant country in summer, some books, and very little *strange* company. Such a plan of life for two or three months must, I should imagine, suit a man who has been for as many years struck from one end of Europe to the other like a tennis-ball. At least I judge of you by myself. I always loved a quiet, studious, indolent life; but never enjoyed the charms of it so truly, as since my return from an agreeable but fatiguing course of motion and hurry. However I shall hear of your arrival, which can scarcely be so soon as January 1766, and shall probably have the misfortune of meeting you in town soon after. We may then settle any plans for the ensuing campaign.

En attendant, (admire me, this is the only scrap of foreign lingo I have imported into this epistle—if you had seen that of Guise to me!) let me tell you a piece of Lausanne news. Nanette Grand is married

married to Lieutenant Colonel Prevost. Grand wrote to me; and by the next post I congratulated both father and daughter. There is exactness for you. The Curchod (Madame Necker) I saw at Paris. She was very fond of me, and the husband particularly civil. Could they insult me more cruelly? Ask me every evening to supper; go to bed, and leave me alone with his wife—what an impertinent security! it is making an old lover of mighty little consequence. She is as handsome as ever, and much genteeler; seems pleased with her fortune rather than proud of it. I was (perhaps indiscreetly enough) exalting Nanette d'Illens's good luck and the fortune. What fortune? (said she, with an air of contempt)—not above twenty thousand livres a-year. I smiled, and she caught herself immediately.—"What airs I give myself in despising twenty thousand livres a-year, who a year ago looked upon eight hundred as the summit of my wishes."

I must end this tedious scrawl. Let me hear from you; I think I deserve it. Believe me, dear Holroyd, I share in all your pleasures, and feel all your misfortunes. Poor Bolton!* I saw it in the newspaper.

* Theophilus Bolton, Esq. a very amiable man, of considerable talents, descended from Sir Richard Bolton, Lord Chancellor of Ireland in the reign of Charles I. and great nephew to Theophilus Bolton, Archbishop of Cashel. He made the tour with Major Ridley and Mr. Holroyd from Lausanne as far as Naples. On the road from Rome to Cajeta, he broke a blood vessel. After passing some time at Naples, the physicians recommended to him a sea voyage.

newspaper. Is Ridley* with you? I suspect not: but if he is, assure him I do not forget him though he does me. Adieu; and believe me, most affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON, Junior.

N° XIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, Beriton, April 29, 1767.

I HAPPENED to-night to stumble upon a very odd piece of intelligence in the St. James's Chronicle; it related to the marriage of a certain Monsieur Olroy,† formerly Captain of Hussars. I do not know how it came into my head that this Captain of Hussars was not unknown to me, and that he might possibly be an acquaintance of yours. If I am not mistaken in my conjecture, pray give my compliments to him, and tell him from me, that I am at least as well pleased that he is married as if I were so myself. Assure him, however, that though as a philosopher I may prefer celibacy, yet as a politician I think it highly proper that the species should be propagated by the usual method; assure him even that I am convinced, that if celi-

voyage. Commodore Harrison most kindly took him and Mr. Holroyd on board the Centurion man of war; and two days after their arrival in the harbour of Genoa, Mr. Bolton died of a consumption.

* Son of Sir Mathew Ridley of Northumberland, Baronet, Major in the Welsh Fusileers. He had served during the seven years war under Prince Ferdinand in Germany.

† The name was so spelt in the newspapers.

bacy is exposed to fewer miseries, marriage can alone promise real happiness, since domestic enjoyments are the source of every good. May such happiness, which is bestowed on few, be given to him; the transient blessings of beauty, and the more durable ones of fortune, good sense, and an amiable disposition.

I can easily conceive, and as easily excuse you, if you have thought mighty little this winter of your poor rusticated friend. I have been confined ever since Christmas, and confined by a succession of very melancholy occupations. I had scarcely arrived at Beriton, where I proposed staying only about a fortnight, when a brother of Mrs. Gibbon's died unexpectedly, though after a very long and painful illness. We were scarcely recovered from the confusion which such an event must produce in a family, when my father was taken dangerously ill, and with some intervals has continued so ever since. I can assure you, my dear Holroyd, that the same event appears in a very different light when the danger is serious and immediate; or when, in the gaiety of a tavern dinner, we affect an insensibility that would do us no great honour were it real. My father is now much better; but I have since been assailed by a severe stroke—the loss of a friend. You remember, perhaps, an officer of our militia, whom I sometimes used to compare to yourself. Indeed, the comparison would have done honour to any one. His feelings were tender and noble, and he was always guided by them: his principles were just and generous, and he acted up

to

to them. I shall say no more, and you will excuse my having said so much, of a man with whom you were unacquainted; but my mind is just now so very full of him, that I cannot easily talk, or even think, of any thing else. If I know you right, you will not be offended at my *weakness*.

What rather adds to my uneasiness, is the necessity I am under of joining our militia the day after to-morrow. Though the lively hurry of such a scene might contribute to divert my ideas, yet every circumstance of it, and the place itself, (which was that of his residence,) will give me many a painful moment. I know nothing would better raise my spirits than a visit from you; the request may appear unseasonable, but I think I have heard you speak of *an uncle* you had near Southampton. At all events, I hope you will snatch a moment to write to me, and give me some account of your present situation and future designs. As you are now fettered, I should expect that you will not be such a *hic et ubique*,* as you have been since your arrival in England. I stay at Southampton from the first to the twenty-eighth of May, and then propose making a short visit to town: if you are any where in the neighbourhood of it, you may depend upon seeing me. I shall then concert measures for seeing a little more of you next winter, than I have lately done, as I hope to take a pretty long spell in town. I sup-

* The motto of the regiment called Royal Foresters, in which Mr. Holroyd had been Captain.

pose Guise has often fallen in your way: he has never once written to me, nor I to him: in the country we want materials, and in London we want time. I ought to recollect, that you even want time to read my unmeaning scrawl. Believe, however, my dear Holroyd, that it is the sincere expression of a heart entirely yours.

N° XX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esquire, to* GEORGE LEWIS SCOTT, *Esquire.*

DEAR SIR,

As I know the value of your time, and as I have already borrowed some of it, I will not increase the debt by an idle preamble.

When I was in Switzerland, I contracted an intimate friendship with Mr. Deyverdun, a young gentleman of one of the best families of that country. Misfortunes have since that time ruined his fortune, and he is at present in a situation very inadequate to his birth and merit, a clerk in one of our Secretaries of State's offices. As the dull mechanic labour of his post still leaves him many leisure hours, he has formed a design of filling them by a work of which he is very capable, and which will perhaps do him some honour. Observing that since the time Dr. Maty discontinued his Journal Britannique, foreigners have often complained they had no tolerable account of English literature, he purposes supplying that deficiency. His understanding (I think I do not indulge a friend's partiality)

tiality) is an exceeding good one, his taste is delicate, his knowledge extensive; he is critically acquainted with our language, and writes very well his own. I have promised him all the little assistance in my power, and cannot help thinking that the union of two friends of different nations, whose genius, language, and even prejudices are so very opposite, may give a peculiar advantage to our works. Besides the extracts which form the basis of every journal, Mr. Deyverdun proposes to introduce two other branches, which, though equally interesting, have been much more neglected, the History of the Theatre and of the Polite Arts; and 2, The Manners of Nations, at least as much of them as a foreigner can describe or strangers understand; characterizing anecdotes, occasional memoirs of singular men or things, &c. will serve to illustrate this part. The plan of the first volume is already formed, and the execution is in great forwardness. This volume will comprize a General Review of the present year; (success, time, and the advice of our booksellers must determine the periods of our future publications.) It will contain the following articles:—L'Histoire de Henri II. par my Lord Lyttleton. 2. Le Nouveau Guide de Bath. 3. Histoire de la Société Civile, par Ferguson. 4. Conclusion des Mémoires de Miss Sidney Biddulph. 5. Témoignages Juifs et Payens en faveur du Christianisme, tome 4^e^, par le Docteur Lardner. 6. Lettres de my Lady Wortley Montague. Tome 7^e^ De La Physique. 8. La Théologie. 9. Le Théâtre et Beaux Arts. 10. Les Mœurs.

11. Nouvelles Littéraires. You see, Sir, what a medley we have thrown together, but various stomachs, we think, require various food. Some can support nothing but novels, others can digest even divinity, and here we have provided accordingly a therogia who will serve them in their own way.

We were however both very conscious that though we were masters of no part of learning, yet there was one of the principal walks which we were peculiarly strangers to, that of the physical and mathematical sciences. This great obstacle was very near destroying our rising scheme, till at last despair gave me a kind of courage, I believe I might as well call it temerity; at last, dear Sir, I determined to apply to you. It would be impertinent in me to say that you are able to oblige us; I shall only say, that from my knowledge of your private character, I had some reason to hope that your inclination would be equal to your ability. What we desire are three or four abstracts every year of the best philosophical works that appear during that interval. To you, dear Sir, the task could not be a difficult one. For your own amusement you will probably peruse those works, and ideas so familiar to you will be very easily thrown upon paper. You will determine much better than we can pretend to do what book would be the properest, if you should condescend to grace our first volume with so great an ornament; but I could wish you would introduce a short Tableau of the present State of the Physical and Mathematical Sciences in this country, as it is the method

method we have agreed to follow in most of our first extracts. Though I know, dear Sir, that you perfectly understand the French language, yet as you may not be accustomed to write in it, every piece you honour us with shall be carefully translated, and if you desire it, submitted to your correction.

Such, dear Sir, is our plan. I flatter myself it will in some degree interest you, and that you will assist us with your advice as well as your pen. At least I will venture to say, that if you are ashamed of the authors, you never will be ashamed of the men. My friend's undertaking is founded upon the most liberal principles. He is well apprized of the small profit to be made from his labour, and resolved to avoid equally flattery and abuse.

If your present occupations should not allow you to assist us, I beg, dear Sir, that you would keep our secret, and that you would believe me,

With great respect,
Your most obedient humble servant,
EDWARD GIBBON, Junior.

Beriton, Oct. 19th, 1767.

N° XXI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* JOHN BAKER HOLROYD, *Esq.* Sheffield-Place.

DEAR HOLROYD, London, 1772.

THE sudden change from the sobriety of Sheffield-place to the irregularities of this town, and to

the wicked company of Wilbraham,* Clarke,† and Damer,‡ &c. having deranged me a good deal, I am forced to employ one of my secretaries to acquaint you with a piece of news I know nothing about myself. It is certain some extraordinary intelligence is arrived this morning from Denmark, and as certain that the levee was suddenly prevented by it. The particulars of that intelligence are variously and obscurely told. It is said, that the king had raised a little physician to the rank of minister and Ganymede; such a mad administration had so disgusted all the nobility, that the fleet and army had revolted, and shut up the king in his palace. *La Reine se trouve mêlée là dedans;* and it is reported that she is confined, but whether in consequence of the insurrection, or some other cause, is not agreed. Such is the rough draft of an affair that nobody yet understands. *Embrassez, de ma part, Madame, et le reste de la chère famille.*

GIBBON.

Et plus bas—WILBRAHAM, Sec.

* George Wilbraham, Esq. of Delamere Lodge, Cheshire.

† Godfrey Clarke, Esq. Member for Derbyshire, who made the tour of Italy at the same time as Mr. Gibbon.

‡ The Hon. John Damer, eldest son of Lord Milton, afterwards created Earl of Dorchester.

N° XXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Boodle's, 10 o'clock, Monday night, Feb. 3d, 1772.

I LOVE, honour, and respect, every member of Sheffield-Place; even my great enemy *Datch, to whom you will please to convey my sincere wishes, that no *simpleton* may wait on him at dinner, that his wise papa may not shew him any pictures, and that his much wiser mamma may chain him hand and foot, in direct contradiction to Magna Charta and the bill of rights.

It is difficult to write news, because there is none. Parliament is perfectly quiet; and I think that Barré,† who is just now playing at whist in the room, will not have exercise of the lungs, except, perhaps, on a message much talked of, and soon expected, to recommend it to the wisdom of the House of Commons to provide a proper future remedy against the improper marriages of the younger branches of the Royal Family. The noise of Lutterel is subsided, but there was some foundation for it. The Colonel's expenses in his bold enterprise were yet unpaid by government. The hero threatened, assumed the patriot, received a sop, and again sunk into the courtier. As to Denmark, it seems now that the king, who was totally unfit for government, has only passed from the

* The name by which John William, the son of Mr. Holroyd, called himself.

† Colonel Barré.

hands

hands of his queen wife, to those of his queen mother-in-law. The former is said to have indulged a very *vague* taste in her amours. She would not be admitted into the Pantheon, whence the *gentlemen proprietors* exclude all beauty, unless unspotted and immaculate (tautology by the bye). *The gentlemen proprietors*, on the other hand, are friends and patrons of the leopard beauties. Advertising challenges have passed between the two great factions, and a bloody battle is expected Wednesday night. *A propos*, the Pantheon, in point of ennui and magnificence, is the wonder of the eighteenth century and of the British empire. Adieu.

N° XXIII.

The Same to the Same.

Boodle's, Saturday night, Feb. 8th, 1772.

THOUGH it is very late, and the bell tells me that I have not above ten minutes left, I employ them with pleasure in congratulating you on the late victory of our dear mamma the Church of England. She had last Thursday seventy-one rebellious sons, who pretended to set aside her will on account of insanity: but two hundred and seventeen worthy champions, headed by Lord North, Burke, Hans Stanley, Charles Fox, Godfrey Clarke, &c. though they allowed the thirty-nine clauses of her testament were absurd and unreasonable, supported the validity of it with infinite humour. By the bye, Charles Fox prepared himself for that holy war, by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise

cise of hazard; his devotion cost him only about 500l. *per* hour—in all 11,000l. Gaby lost 5000l. This is from the best authority. I hear too, but will not warrant it, that W. H. by way of paying his court to L. C. has lost this winter 12,000l. How I long to be ruined!

There are two county contests, Sir Thomas Egerton and Colonel Townley in Lancashire, after the county had for some time gone a-begging. In Salop, Sir Watkin, supported by Lord Gower, happened by a punctilio to disoblige Lord Craven, who told us last night, that he had not quite 9,000l. a-year in that county, and who has set up Pigot against him. You may suppose we all wish for Got Amighty* against that black devil.

I am sorry your journey is deferred. Compliments to Datch. As he is now in durance, great minds forgive their enemies, and I hope he may be released by this time.——Coming, Sir. Adieu.

You see the Princess of W. is gone. Hans Stanley says, it is believed the Empress Queen has taken the same journey.

N° XXIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, London, Feb. 13th, 1772.

THE papers and plans arrived safe in town last night, and will be in your hands in their intact

* Alluding to the Welsh opinion that Sir Watkin was in Wales nearly as great a personage.

virgin

virgin state in a day or two. Consider them at leisure, if that word is known in the rural life. Unite, divide, but (above all) *raise*. Bring them to London with you: I wait your orders; nor shall I, for fear of tumbling, take a single step till your arrival, which, on many accounts, I hope will not be long deferred.

Clouds still hover over the horizon of Denmark. The public circumstances of the revolution are related, and, I understand, very exactly, in the foreign papers. The secret springs of it still remain unknown. The town indeed seems at present quite tired of the subject. The Princess's death, her character, and what she left, engross the conversation. She died without a will; and as her savings were generally disposed of in charity, the small remains of her personal fortune will make a trifling object when divided among her children. Her favourite, the P. of B. very properly insisted on the king's immediately sealing up all the papers, to secure her from the idle reports which would be so readily swallowed by the great English monster. The business of Lord and Lady * * * * * is finally compromised, by the arbitration of the Chancellor and Lord Camden. He gives her 1,200l. a-year separate maintenance, and 1,500l. to set out with: but as her Ladyship is now a new face, her husband, who has already bestowed on the public seventy young beauties, has conceived a violent but hopeless passion for his chaste moiety. Her brother told me that he has now in his hands a counter affidavit of Countess Deschoff, in which she

she declares that she received a sum of money to swear the former, the contents of which are totally false! Such infamous conduct may blast her, but can never acquit the other. Lord Chesterfield is dying. County oppositions subside. Adieu.

Entirely yours.

N° XXV.

The Same to the Same.

DEAR HOLROYD, Feb. 21st, 1772.

* * * * * * * * * *

HOWEVER, notwithstanding my indignation, I will employ five minutes in telling you two or three recent pieces of news.

1. Charles Fox is commenced patriot, and is already attempting to pronounce the words *country, liberty, corruption*, &c.; with what success, time will discover. Yesterday he resigned the Admiralty. The story is, that he could not prevail on ministry to join with him in his intended repeal of the marriage act, (a favourite measure of his father, who opposed it from its origin,) and that Charles very judiciously thought Lord Holland's friendship imported him more than Lord North's.

2. Yesterday the marriage message came to both Houses of Parliament. You will see the words of it in the papers: and, thanks to the submissive piety of this session, it is hoped that the princes of the next generation will not find it so easy as their uncles have done, to expose themselves and burthen the public.

3. To-day

3. To-day the House of Commons was employed in a very odd way. Tommy Townshend moved, that the sermon of Dr. Knowell, who preached before the House on the 30th of January, (*id est*, before the Speaker and four members,) should be burnt by the common hangman, as containing arbitrary, tory, high-flown doctrines. The House was nearly agreeing to the motion, till they recollected that they had already thanked the Preacher for his excellent discourse, and ordered it to be printed. Knowell's bookseller is much obliged to the Right Honourable Tommy Townshend.

When do you come to town? I want money, and am tired of sticking to the earth by so many roots. *Embrassez de ma part*, &c. Adieu.

Ever yours.

N° XXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esquire, to Mrs.* GIBBON, Beriton.

DEAR MADAM, London, March 21st, 1772.

I HAVE advanced with some care and some success in gaining an idea of the Lenborough estate. The tenants are at will, and, from a comparison of my rents with the neighbouring ones, particularly Lord * * * *, there is great probability that my estate is very much under-let. My friend Holroyd, who is a most invaluable counsellor, is strongly of that opinion. Sir * * *, * * * is just come home. I am sorry to see many alterations, and little improvement. From an honest wild English buck, he

he is grown a *philosopher*. Lord * * * * displeases every body by the affectation of consequence: the young baronet disgusts no less by the affectation of wisdom. He speaks in short sentences, quotes Montagne, seldom smiles, never laughs, drinks only water, professes to command his passions, and intends to marry in five months. The two lords, his uncle, as well as * * * *, attempt to shew him, that such behaviour, even were it reasonable, does not suit this country. He remains incorrigible, and is every day losing ground in the good opinion of the public, which at his first arrival ran strongly in his favour. Deyverdun is probably on his journey towards England, but is not yet come.

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c. &c.

N° XXVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, Pall-Mall, May 16th, 1772.

I WISH you lived nearer, or even that you could pass a week at Beriton. When shall you be at Richmond? or would there be any *use* in my going down to Sheffield for a day or two? In you alone I put my trust, and without you I should be perplexed, discouraged, and frightened; for not a single fish has yet bit at the Lenborough bait.

I dined the other day with Mr. Way at Boodle's. He told me, that he was just going down to Sheffield-Place. As he has probably unladen all the politics, and Mrs. Way all the scandal of the town, I shall

I shall for *the present only* satisfy myself with the needful; among which I shall always reckon my sincere compliments to Madame, and my profound respects for Mr. Datch.

I am, dear Holroyd,
Truly yours.

It is confidently asserted that the Emperor and King of Prussia are to run for very deep stakes over the Polish course. If the news be true, I back Austria against the aged horse, provided little Laudohn rides the match.

N. B. Crossing and jostling allowed.

N° XXVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esquire, to Mrs.* HOLROYD, *Senior.*

Beriton, near Petersfield, Hampshire,
MADAM, July 17th, 1772.

THERE is not any event which could have affected me with greater surprise and deeper concern, than the news in last night's paper, of the death of our poor little amiable friend Master Holroyd, whom I loved, not only for his parents' sake, but for his own. Should the news be true, (for even yet I indulge some faint hopes,) what must be the distress of our friends at Sheffield! I so truly sympathize with them, that I know not how to write to Holroyd; but must beg to be informed of the state of the

the family by a line from you. I have some company and business here, but would gladly quit them, if I had the least reason to think that my presence at Sheffield would afford comfort or satisfaction to the man in the world whom I love and esteem most. I am, Madam, your most obedient humble Servant, &c.

N° XXIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esquire, to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esquire.*

MY DEAR HOLROYD, Beriton, July 30th, 1772.

IT was my intention to set out for Sheffield as soon as I received your affecting letter, and I hoped to have been with you to-day; but walking very carelessly yesterday morning, I fell down, and put out a small bone in my ancle. I am now under the surgeon's hands, but think, and most earnestly hope, that this little accident will not delay my journey longer than the middle of next week. I share, and wish I could alleviate, your feelings. I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Holroyd. I am, my dear Holroyd, most truly yours.

N° XXX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esquire, to Mrs.* GIBBON, Beriton.

DEAR MADAM, Sheffield-Place, August 7th, 1772.

I SET out at six yesterday morning from Uppark, and got to Brighthelmstone about two; a very thin

season, every body gone to Spa. In the evening I reached this place. My friend appears, as he ever will, in a light truly respectable; concealing the most exquisite sufferings under the show of composure, and even cheerfulness, and attempting, though with little success, to confirm the weaker mind of his partner. I find, my friend expresses so much uneasiness at the idea of my leaving him again soon, that I cannot refuse to pass the month here. If Mr. Scott, as I suppose, is at Beriton, he has himself too high a sense of friendship not to excuse my neglecting him. I had some hopes of engaging Mr. and Mrs. Holroyd to make an excursion to Portsmouth, Isle of Wight, Southampton, &c. in which case they would spend a few days at Beriton. A sudden resolution was taken last night in favour of the tour. We set out, Mr. and Mrs. Holroyd, Mr. Fauquier, and myself, next Thursday, and shall dine at Beriton the following day, and stay there, most probably, three or four days. A farm-house, without either cook or housekeeper, will afford but indifferent entertainment; but we must *exert*, and they must *excuse*. Our tour will last about a fortnight; after which my friend presses me to return with him, and in his present situation I shall be at a loss how to refuse him.

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c. &c.

N° XXXI.

Dr. HURD, (*afterwards Bishop of* Worcester) *to Mr.* GIBBON.

Sir, Thurcaston, August 29th, 1772.

Your very elegant letter on the antiquity and authenticity of the book of Daniel, (just now received,) finds me here, if not without leisure, yet without books, and therefore in no condition to enter far into the depths of this controversy; which indeed is the less necessary, as every thing that relates to the subject will come of course to be considered by my learned successors in the new lecture. For as the prophecies of Daniel made an important link in *that chain, which*, as you say, *has been let down from heaven to earth*, (but not by the author of the late sermons, who brought into view only what he had not invented,) the grounds on which their authority rests will, without doubt, be carefully examined, and, as I suppose, firmly established.

But in the mean time, and to make at least some small return for the civility of your address to me, I beg leave to trouble you with two or three short remarks, such as occur to me on reading your letter.

Your main difficulties are these two: 1. That the author of the book of Daniel is *too clear for a prophet*; as appears from his prediction of the Persian and Macedonian affairs; and, 2. *too fabulous* for a contemporary historian; as is evident,

you suppose, from his mistakes, particularly in the sixth chapter.

1. The first of these difficulties is an extraordinary one. For why may not prophecy, if the inspirer think fit, be as clear as history? Scriptural prophecy, whence your idea of its obscurity is taken, is *occasionally* thus clear, I mean after the event; and Daniel's prophecy of the revolutions in the Grecian empire, would have been obscure enough to Porphyry himself before it.

But your opinion, after all, when you come to explain yourself, really is, as one should expect, that, as a prophet, Daniel is not clear enough; for you enforce the old objection of Porphyry, by observing, that where a pretended prophecy is clear to a certain point of time, and afterwards obscure and shadowy, there common sense leads one to conclude that the author of it was an impostor.

This reasoning is plausible, but not conclusive, unless it be taken for granted, that a prophecy must, in all its parts, be equally clear and precise: whereas, on the supposition of real inspiration, it may be fit, I mean it may suit with the views of the inspirer, to predict some things with more perspicuity, and in terms more obviously and directly applicable to the events in which they were fulfilled, than others. But further, this reasoning, whatever force it may have, has no place here; at least you evidently beg the question when you urge it; because the persons you dispute against maintain, that the subsequent prophecies of Daniel are equally distinct with those preceding ones concerning

cerning the Persian and Macedonian empires, at least so much of them as they take to have been fulfilled; and that to judge of the rest, we must wait for the conclusion of them.

However, you admit that the suspicion arising from the clearest prophecy may be removed by direct positive evidence that it was composed before the event. But then you carry your notions of that evidence very far, when you require, "that the existence of such a prophecy, prior to its accomplishment, should be proved by the knowledge of its being generally diffused amongst an enlightened nation previous to that period, and its public existence attested by an unbroken chain of authentic writers."

What you here claim as a matter of *right*, is, without question, very desirable, but should, I think, be accepted, if it be given at all, as a matter of *favour*. For what you describe is the utmost evidence that the case admits: but what right have we in this, or any other subject whatever of natural or revealed religion, to the utmost evidence? Is it not enough that the evidence be sufficient to induce a reasonable assent? and is not that assent reasonable, which is given to real evidence, though of an inferior kind, when uncontrolled by any greater? And such evidence we clearly have for the authenticity of the book of Daniel, in the reception of it by the Jewish nation down to the time of Jesus, whose appeal to it supposes and implies that reception to have been constant and general: not to observe, that the testimony of Jesus is fur-

ther supported by all the considerations that are alleged for his own divine character. To this evidence, which is positive so far as it goes, you have nothing to oppose but surmise and conjectures; that is, nothing that deserves to be called evidence. But I doubt, Sir, you take for granted that the claim of inspiration is never to be allowed, so long as there is a possibility of supposing that it was not given.

2. In the second division of your letter, which is longer, and more elaborate, than the first, you endeavour to shew that the *historical* part of the book of Daniel, chiefly that of the sixth chapter, is false and fabulous, and as such, confutes and overthrows the *prophetical*. What you advance on this head, is contained under *five* articles:

1. You think it strange that Daniel, or any other man, should be promoted to a secret office of state, *for his skill in divination.*

But here, first, you forget that Joseph was thus promoted for the same reason. Or, if you object to this instance, what should hinder the promotion either of Joseph or Daniel, (when their skill in divination had once brought them to the notice and favour of their sovereign,) for what you call *mere human accomplishments?* For such assuredly both these great men possessed, if we may believe the plain part of their story, which asserts of Joseph, and indeed proves, that he was in no common degree *discreet and wise;* and of Daniel, that *an excellent spirit was found in him;* nay, that *he had knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom,* over

over and above his *understanding in all visions and dreams*. In short, Sir, though princes of old might not make it a rule to chuse their ministers out of their soothsayers, yet neither would their being soothsayers, if they were otherwise well accomplished, prevent them from being ministers. Just as in modern times, though churchmen have not often, I will suppose, been made officers of state, even by bigotted princes, because they were churchmen; yet neither have they been always excluded from serving in those stations when they have been found eminently qualified for them.

2. Your next exception is, that a combination could scarce have been formed in the court of Babylon against the favourite minister, (though such factions are common in other courts,) because the courtiers of Darius *must have apprehended that the piety of Daniel would be asserted by a miraculous interposition*; of which they had seen a recent instance. And here, Sir, you expatiate with a little too much complacency on the strange indifference which the ancient world shewed to the gift of miracles. You do not, I dare say, expect a serious answer to this charge; or if you do, it may be enough to observe, what I am sure your own reading and experience must have rendered very familiar to you, that the strongest belief, or conviction of the mind, perpetually gives way to the inflamed selfish passions; and that, when men have any scheme of interest or revenge much at heart, they are not restrained from pursuing it, though the scaffold and the axe stand before them in full

view, and have perhaps been streaming but the day before with the blood of other state-criminals. I ask not, whether miracles have ever *actually* existed, but whether you do not think that multitudes have been firmly *persuaded* of their existence; and yet their indifference about them, is a fact which I readily concede to you.

3. Your third criticism is directed against what is said of *the law of the Medes and Persians, that it altereth not;* where I find nothing to admire, but the extreme rigour of Asiatic despotism. For I consider this irrevocability of the law, when once promulgated by the sovereign, not as contrived to be a check on his will, but rather to shew the irresistible and fatal course of it. And this idea was so much cherished by the despots of Persia, that, rather than revoke the iniquitous law, obtained by surprise, for exterminating the Jews, Ahasuerus took the part, as we read in the book of Esther, (and as Baron Montesquieu, I remember, observes,) to permit the Jews to defend themselves against the execution of it; whence we see how consistent this law is with the determination of the judges, quoted by you from Herodotus, "that it was lawful for the king to do whatever he *pleased*:" for we understand that he did *not* please that this law, when once declared by him, should be altered.

You add under this head, "May I not assert that the Greek writers, who have so copiously treated of the affairs of Persia, have not left us the smallest vestige of a restraint, equally injurious to the monarch and prejudicial to the people?" I have

have not the Greek writers by me to consult, but a common book I chance to have at hand, refers me to one such vestige, in a very eminent Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus. *Lowth's Comment. in loc.*

4. A fourth objection to the historic truth of the book of Daniel is taken, with more plausibility, from the matter of this law, which, as you truly observe, was very strange for the king's counsellor to advise, and for any despot whatever to enact.

But, 1. I a little question whether prayer was so constant and considerable a part of Pagan worship as is supposed; and if it was not, the prejudices of the people would not be so much shocked by this interdict as we are ready to think. Daniel indeed prayed three times a day; but the idolaters might content themselves with praying now and then at a stated solemnity. It is clear, that when you speak of *depriving men of the comforts, and priests of the profits, of religion*, you have Christian, and even modern principles and manners in your eye: perhaps in the *comforts*, you represented to yourself a company of poor inflamed Huguenots under persecution; and in the *profits*, the lucrative trade of popish masses. But be this as it may, it should be considered, 2. That this law could not, in the nature of the thing, suppress all prayer, if the people had any great propensity to it. It could not suppress *mental* prayer; it could not even suppress *bodily* worship, if performed, as it easily might be, in the night, or in secret. Daniel, it was well known, was used to pray in open day-light,

day-light, and in a place exposed to inspection, from his usual manner of praying; which manner, it was easily concluded, so zealous a votary as he was, would not change or discontinue, on account of the edict. Lastly, though the edict passed for thirty days, to make sure work, yet there was no doubt but the end proposed would be soon accomplished, and then it was not likely that much care would be taken about the observance of it.

All this put together, I can very well conceive that extreme envy and malice in the courtiers might suggest the idea of such a law, and that an impotent despot might be flattered by it. Certainly, if what we read in the third chapter be admitted, that *one* of these despots required all people, nations, and language, to worship his image on pain of death, there is no great wonder that *another* of them should demand the exclusive worship of himself for a month; nay, perhaps, he might think himself civil, and even bounteous to his gods, when he left them a share of the other eleven. For as to the presumption,

> " Nihil est quod credere de se
> Non possit, cum laudatur diis æqua potestas.

5. A fifth, and what you seem to think the strongest, objection to the credit of the book of Daniel is, that " no such person as Darius the Mede is to be found in the succession of the Babylonish princes," (you mean as given in Ptolemy's canon and the Greek writers,) " between the time of Nebuchadnezzar and that of Cyrus." In saying this,

this, you do not forget or disown what our ablest chronologers have said on the subject; but then you object that Xenophon's Cyaxares (to serve a turn) has been made to personate Darius the Mede; and yet that Xenophon's book, whether it be a romance or a true history, overturns the use which they have made of this hypothesis.

I permit myself perhaps to be too much flattered by your civility in referring me to my own taste, rather than to the authority of Cicero: but the truth is, I am much disposed to agree with you, that, "if we unravel with any care the fine texture of the Cyropœdia, we shall discover in every thread the Spartan discipline and the philosophy of Socrates." But then, as the judicious author chose to make so recent a story as that of Cyrus, and one so well known, the vehicle of his political and moral instructions, he would be sure to keep up to the truth of the story as far as might be; especially in the leading facts, and in the principal persons, as we may say, of the drama. This obvious rule of decorum such a writer as Xenophon could not fail to observe; and therefore, on the supposition that his Cyropœdia is a romance, I should conclude certainly that the outline of it was genuine history. But,

2. If it be so, you conclude that there is no ground for thinking that Darius the Mede ever reigned at Babylon, because Cyaxares himself never reigned there.

Now, on the idea of Xenophon's book being a romance, there might be good reason for the author's

author's taking no notice of the short reign of Cyaxares, which would break the unity of his work, and divert the reader's attention too much from the hero of it: while yet the omission could hardly seem to violate historic truth, since the lustre of his hero's fame, and the real power which, out of question, he reserved to himself, would make us forget or overlook Cyaxares. But, as to the fact, it seems no way incredible that Cyrus should concede to his royal ally, his uncle, and his father-in-law, (for he was all these,) the *nominal* possession of the sovereignty; or that he should *share* the sovereignty with him; or, at least, that he should leave the *administration*, as we say, in his hands at Babylon, while he himself was prosecuting his other conquests at a distance. Any of these things is supposable enough: and I would rather admit any of them than reject the express, the repeated, the circumstantial testimony of a not confessedly fabulous historian.

After all, Sir, I should forfeit, I know, your good opinion, if I did not acknowledge that some, at least, of these circumstances are such as one should not, perhaps, expect at first sight. But then such is the condition of things here; and what is true in human life, is not always, I had almost said, not often, that which was previously to be expected; whence an ordinary romance is, they say, more *probable* than the best history.

But should any or all of these circumstances convince you perfectly, that some degree of error or fiction is to be found in the book of Daniel, it would

would be too precipitate to conclude that therefore the whole book was of no authority; for, at most, you could but infer, that the historical part, in which those circumstances are observed, namely, the 6th chapter, is not genuine; just as you know has been judged of some other historical tracts which had formerly been inserted in the book of Daniel. For it is not with these collections, which go under the names of the Prophets, as with some regularly connected system, where a charge of falsehood, if made good against one part, shakes the credit of the whole. Fictitious histories may have been joined to true prophecies, when all that bore the name of the same person, or any way related to him, came to be put together in the same volume: but the detection of such misalliance could not affect the prophecies; certainly not those of Daniel, which respect *the latter times;* for these have an intrinsic evidence in themselves, and assert their own authenticity, in proportion as we see, or have reason to admit the accomplishment of them.

And now, Sir, I have only to commit these hasty reflections to your candour; a virtue which cannot be separated from the love of truth, and of which I observe many traces in your agreeable letter; and if you should indulge this quality still further, so as to conceive the possibility of that being *true and reasonable*, in matters of religion, which may seem strange, or, to so lively a fancy as yours, even ridiculous, you would not hurt the credit of your excellent understanding, and would thus remove one, perhaps a principal, occasion of those

those mists which, as you complain, *hang over these nice and difficult subjects.*

I am with true respect, Sir, yours, &c.

(Signed) R. H.

The following Fragment was found with the foregoing Letter, in Mr. GIBBON's *handwriting.*

YOUR answers to my five objections against the 6th chapter of Daniel come next to be considered.

1. With regard to Daniel's promotion, I consent to withdraw my opposition, and to allow the cases of Ximenes, Wolsey, and Richelieu as parallel instances: though there is surely some difference between a young foreign soothsayer being *suddenly* rewarded, for the interpretation of a dream, with the government of Babylon, and a priest of the established church, rising gradually to the great offices of state.

2. You apprehend, Sir, that my second objection scarcely deserves a serious answer; and that it is quite sufficient to appeal to my own reading and experience, whether *the strongest conviction of the mind does not perpetually give way to the inflamed and selfish passions.* Since you appeal to me, I shall fairly lay before you the result of my observations on that subject. 1. It must be confessed that the drunkard often sinks into the grave, and the prodigal into a gaol, without a possibility of deceiving or of checking themselves. But they sink by slow degrees; and, whilst they indulge the ruling passion, attend only to the trifling moment

moment of each guinea, or of each bottle, without calculating their accumulated weight, till they feel themselves irretrievably crushed under it. 2. In most of the hazardous enterprizes of life there is a mixture of chance and good fortune; what is called good fortune, is often the effect of skill: and as our vanity flatters us into an opinion of our superior merit, we are neither surprised nor dismayed by the miscarriage of our rash predecessors. *The conspirator turns his eyes from the axe and scaffold, perhaps still streaming with blood,* to the successful boldness of Scylla, of Cæsar, and of Cromwell; and convinces himself that on such a golden pursuit it is even *prudent* to stake a precarious and insipid life. We may add, that the most daring flights of ambition are as often the effects of necessity as of choice. The princes of Hindostan must either reign or perish; and when Cæsar passed the Rubicon, it was scarcely possible for him to return to a private station. 3. You think, Sir, we may learn from our own experience, that an indifference concerning miracles is very compatible with a full conviction of their truth; and so it undoubtedly is with such a conviction as we have an opportunity of observing.

N° XXXII.

E. GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, Beriton, Oct. 13th, 1772.

I AM just arrived, as well as yourself, at my *dii penates,* but with very different intention. You will

will ever remain a bigot to those rustic deities; I propose to abjure them soon, and to reconcile myself to the catholic church of London.

I am so happy, so exquisitely happy, at feeling so many mountains taken off my shoulders, that I can brave your indignation, and even the three-forked lightning of Jupiter himself. My reasons for taking so unwarrantable a step (approved of by Hugonin) were no unmanly despondency, (though it daily became more apparent how much the farm would suffer, both in reality and in reputation, by another year's management). * * * * * * I see pleasure but not use in a congress, therefore decline it. I know nothing as yet of a purchaser, and can only give you full and unlimited powers. If you think it necessary, let me know when you sell; but, however, do as you please.

I am sincerely glad to hear Mrs. H. is better. I still think Bath would suit her. She, and you too, I fear, rather want the physic of the mind,* than of the body. Tell me something about yourself. If, among a crowd of acquaintances, one friend can afford you any comfort, I am quite at your service. Once more, adieu.

N° XXXIII.

E. GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, Pall-Mall, Dec. 11th, 1772.

BY this time, I suppose you returned to the Elysian fields of Sheffield. The country (I do not

* Mr. Holroyd's then only son died about two months before this time.

mean

mean any particular reflections on Sussex) must be vastly pleasant at this time of the year! For my own part, the punishment of my sins has at length overtaken me. On Thursday the third of December, in the present year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two, between the hours of one and two in the afternoon, as I was crossing St. James's church-yard, I stumbled, and *again sprained my foot;* but, alas! after two days pain and confinement, a horrid monster, *ycleped the gout,* made me a short visit; and though he has now taken his leave, I am full of apprehensions that he may have liked my company well enough to call again.

The parliament, after a few soft murmurs, is gone to sleep, to awake again after Christmas, safely folded in Lord North's arms. The town is gone into the country, and I propose *visiting Sheffield* about Sunday se'nnight, if by that time I can get my household preparations (I have as good as taken Lady Rous's lease in Bentinck-street) in any forwardness. Shall I *angle for Batt?* No news stirring, except the Duchess of G.'s pregnancy certainly declared. Your's sincerely.

N° XXXIV.

The Same to the Same.

Boodle's, Ten o'clock, Thursday Evening, Dec. 1772.

DEAR HOLROYD,

MY schemes with regard to you have been entirely disappointed. The business that called me

to town was not ready before the 20th of last month, and the same business has kept me here till now. I have however a very strong inclination to eat a Christmas mince pie with you; and let me tell you that inclination is no small compliment. What are the trees and waters of Sheffield-Place, compared with the comfortable smoke, lazy dinners, and inflammatory Junius's, which we can every day enjoy in town? You have seen the last Junius? He calls on the distant legions to march to the Capitol, and free us from the tyranny of the Prætorian guards. I cannot answer for the ghost of the *hic et ubique*, but the Hampshire militia are determined to keep the peace for fear of a broken head. After all, do I mean to make you a visit next week? Upon my soul, I cannot tell. I tell every body that I shall: I know that I cannot pass the week with any man in the world with whom the pleasure of seeing each other will be more sincere or more reciprocal. Yet, *entre nous*, I do not believe that I shall be able to get out of this town before you come into it. At all events I look forwards, with great impatience, to Bruton-street* and the Romans.†

Believe me most truly yours.

* Where Mr. Holroyd's family passed a winter.

† The Roman Club.

N° XXXV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, January 12, 1773.

LENBOROUGH is no more! Lord * * * * acted like a Jew, and I dare say now repents it. In his room * * * * found me a better man, a rich, brutish, honest horse-dealer, who has got a great fortune by serving the cavalry. On Thursday he saw Lenborough, on Friday came to town with * * * *, and this morning at nine o'clock we struck at 20,000*l.* after a very hard battle. As times go, I am not dissatisfied. * * * * and the new Lord of Lenborough (by name Lovegrove) dined with me; and though we did not speak the same language, yet by the help of signs, such as that of putting about the bottle, the natives seemed well satisfied.

The whole world is going down to Portsmouth, where they will enjoy the pleasures of smoke, noise, heat, bad lodgings, and expensive reckonings. For my own part, I have firmly resisted importunity, declined parties, and mean to pass the busy week in the soft retirement of my *bocage* de Bentinck-street. Yesterday the East India Company positively refused the loan: a noble resolution, could they get money any where else. They are violent; and it was moved, and the motion heard with some degree of approbation, that they should instantly abandon India to Lord North, Sujah Dowlah, or the Devil, if he chose to take it. Adieu.

N° XXXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, Boodle's, May 11, 1773.

I AM full of worldly cares, anxious about the great twenty-fourth, plagued with the Public Advertiser, distressed by the most dismal dispatches from Hugonin. Mrs. Lee claims a million of repairs, which will cost a million of money.

The House of Commons sat late last night. Burgoyne made some spirited motions—"That the territorial acquisitions in India belonged to the state (that was the word); that grants to the servants of the company (such as jaghires) were illegal; and that there would be no true repentance without restitution." Wedderburne defended the nabobs with great eloquence, but little argument. The motions were carried without a division; and the hounds go out again next Friday. They are in high spirits; but the more sagacious ones have no idea they shall kill. Lord North spoke for the inquiry, but faintly and reluctantly. Lady * * * is said to be in town at her mother's, and a separation is unavoidable; but there is nothing certain.

Adieu. Sincerely yours.

N° XXXVII.

Mr. WHITAKER *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR,

I THANK you very cordially for your letter of criticisms upon Fingal and myself. It is such an one as a friend should write and I wish to receive.

And

And I cannot but observe, that our acquaintance, so sensibly and properly begun, seems for that reason to promise a much longer continuance than the customary intimacies of the world.

Your remark upon the dramatic poem of Comala struck me very strongly upon my first reading it. It is quite new, and equally acute and ingenious. The elder son of Severus was *not* denominated Caracalla, at the time of his father's or his own expedition into Caledonia. And yet, perhaps, in the fond credulity of a man that admires the poems of Ossian, and has built too much upon them to allow them materially affected by any interpolations, I see the objection, as I reflect more upon it, losing gradually its force, and at last resolving into nothing.

It proceeds upon a supposition, that, if not true itself, makes the other useless. This is, That the poems in general, and Comala in particular, were either written at the time of the transactions recorded in them; or with a sacred regard to the names then borne by the agents. And this I apprehend not to be really the case. At least, it cannot be proved. And, till it is, the objection (I think) has nothing to rest upon. That the poems in general were not written at the time, is plain from a variety of circumstances, in which the author, like our Milton, full of his own feelings in the blindness and solitude of age, frequently leaves his subject, and comes home, as it were, to his own business and bosom. And that this of Comala was not, is demonstrable, because the author was not then born perhaps, and was certainly in his

infancy only. This poem, therefore, like all the rest, was written many years after the fact, and probably, like them, in the later stages of Ossian's life; certainly not till the middle period of it, when the fervours of the youthful warrior were tempered by years into the steadier glow of manhood and poetry. He *then* appears as a renowned bard, the well-known voice of Cona. And then, employing the hours of peaceful inactivity in composing his poems, he would naturally, I suppose, make use of the names, whatever the actors might have borne at the time, that were most familiar to his countrymen when he wrote. This would certainly be his mode of acting, I think; and, if the name of Antoninus had been sunk for years in that of Caracalla, the poet would be *obliged* indeed to make a sort of poetical anachronism, and use the latter appellation instead of the former.

That the name of Caracalla was the general one attributed to the son of Severus in the empire, and consequently by the nations bordering upon it, is plain, I think, from its transmission to the present times, and the popular use of it over all Europe. The concurrence of all modern writers in the name must have resulted from some common principle of agreement, the popularity and familiarity of it among them. And accordingly Bede, who mentions the emperor by the title of Bassianus and Antoninus in one place, speaks of him in another under the name of Antoninus cognomento Caracalla (p. 20. Smith). This therefore being his popular title, when Ossian wrote, he would naturally use it in his poems. The name of Bassianus was never

never known probably among the Caledonians. That of Antoninus would be too indistinct, and not point out the person intended with sufficient particularity. But that of Caracalla would answer every difficulty: it was at once popular and specific; and the anticipation was of little moment in itself, and in the eye of poetry, especially, of none at all.

This seems to me a just and fair account of that little anachronism, if it can be so called, which your eye, my friend, has first found out in the poems of Ossian. And this comes directly to the point, I think, and without any acknowledgment of interpolations in them. Could such be proved, we must give up the authenticity of the poems as to every historical purpose. Had such been made, they must have detected themselves: and we have sufficient authority to say, that no such were made. "On Mr. Macpherson's return from the Highlands with the poems in their original state," says Dr. Blair, "he set himself to translate under the eye of some who were acquainted with the Galic language, and looked into his manuscripts; and by a large publication, afterwards, made an appeal to all the natives of the Highlands and islands of Scotland, whether he had been faithful to his charge, and done justice to their well-known and favourite poems." The Doctor accordingly informs us, that he had applied by letters himself to several persons of credit and honour, who were natives of the Highlands and Isles, and well acquainted with the poems and the language, desiring to know their real opinion of the translation;

and that not one of them "insinuates the most remote suspicion, that Mr. Macpherson has either forged or *adulterated* any one of the poems he has published." The Doctor then enters into a detail of testimonies, which, I think, carry the highest conviction with them, concerning a point which, at other times, I have been a little inclined to doubt, the real accuracy and strict fidelity of the translator. And the cursory reading of these evidences, now, has had such an effect upon my mind, that I am fully persuaded they must have a great one upon an understanding like yours, sceptical perhaps, but argumentative, hesitating in its assent, but not from wild surmises, or airy suspicions, but from doubts, reasonable though perhaps not just, and objections grounded though not sufficient.

This subject has taken up more of my letter than I originally intended it should, and I hasten from Ossian to myself. Your judgment concerning my attempt to rescue the character and actions of Arthur from the accumulated shade of 1200 years, as it is the result of a careful and attentive perusal, has gratified the spirit of authorship about me very much. As you have shewn by pointing out some of the faults in the work, that you are superior to the usual mode of treating authors, I lay the greater stress upon it; and, as you had taken a different route in your own work, I lay still greater. You think, however, that I too peremptorily censured Dr. Hurd with regard to his asserted origin of chivalry, and that indeed my origin of it is not so just as his. As to the former, I am ready to own, and I do

I do voluntarily acknowledge, that there is a vein of presumptuousness and decisiveness running throughout the whole of the first as well as the second volume, which (after I had published the first) I stood amazed at on a review; and can only account for my being betrayed into it, by the natural sanguineness of my temper, heightened by the real or supposed discoveries that I had made, and venting itself uncorrected in the solitude of a study. And I corrected it in my second edition of the 1st volume, that I published last winter, and have also corrected it some weeks ago in that copy of the second which I am re-preparing for the press. But the censure itself (if it may be called a censure) seems to me to be just. You think, that the whole argument for my placing the origin of chivalry in the age of Arthur, rests upon this, that his warriors shared with him the dangers of battle and the feast of victory: but I apprehend that it does not. I have noted, that a military order appears to have existed among Arthur's knights, from the continuance of it near 100 years after his death (p. 533 and 536); and this, I think, entirely precludes your objection and Dr. Hurd's hypothesis.

What you observe concerning the enthusiasm of my style and sentiments in the religious part of the work, is more just, I think. That of the style is the natural operation of my over-vivacity when I wrote it, near five years ago, raised and coloured by what (I hope) I shall ever retain, my unbounded admiration of the Christian system. But I had mellowed and softened both in my corrected copy, before

before I received yours, and have thrown in some additional softenings since. I wish to write like a man who is deeply impressed with the sensibilities of religion; and I have even the fond desire of speaking usefully to the heart, when I am generally writing only to the head. But I do not want to counteract my own purposes. I know the philosophic air of coldness with which the present age affects to receive any notices of religion: and some prudential deference must be paid to the irreligious humour. You think that I have not paid enough;—and so I think. The monkish bigotry of the Saxon kings, which you note to be touched with too gentle an hand, and which, I think, was not touched at all, I have now, in consequence of your letter, animadverted upon in that sort of transitory manner, however, which alone was suited to the design of the paragraph, and the turn of the sentiments. My "rough treatment of Plutarch," though tolerably gentle, I think, I have softened still more, on the credit of your hint: and my rougher of Mr. Hume will be discarded, not perhaps for less severity, but for greater genteelness. All that relates to him will be thrown together into the Appendix, be greatly enlarged, and so form a regular criticism for the Saxon period. And the remarks will be written in a more critical and historical manner. My treatment of Socrates, which you think harsh, seems to me highly complimental. Complimental it certainly is, with regard to his general character. And the only supposable harshness is, that he is said to have lived and died a polytheist.

The

The avarice and ambition of the Saxon clergy, you think, I have also touched too gently; and I did not mean to touch it at all. All that I have said relates merely to the emoluments and honours conferred upon them: and do those necessarily imply avarice, or these ambition, in the receivers? I own that my work would have been better adapted to the taste of many in the present time, if I had, with one of Mr. Hume's superior airs, treated the clergy very freely; inveighed against ambition in them, and yet considered it as the great stimulus to virtuous actions in the laity, and branded them for an avarice which was founded only in the surmises of an ungenerous suspicion. But surely it does not become any man of sentiment and spirit to write in the strain of popular prejudice, and to sacrifice the praises of future generations to the applause of the present. The time will soon come, when this momentary vapour will give way to others, be lost and forgotten in the common mass, or be remembered only for a while, because of the odd and fantastic shapes that it assumed. And this will serve equally as my apology for the assertion which seems so striking to you, that of the divine institution of tythes. They appear to me to be as divine now, as they are acknowledged to have been at first: and I see not, how the argument that is urged in the text for their divinity, can possibly be overthrown.* In con-

* It is no small reproach to the human understanding, that a man of Mr. Whitaker's abilities should maintain such opinions. It was supposed, to the credit of the English clergy, that scarcely one

condescension however to the world, I have struck out the whole paragraph in the notes upon Mr. Hume, in which the subject was gone over more formally again; and I leave the whole to stand upon what is said in p. 790, 791.

I have thus replied more largely than I at first intended, to your very obliging letter, Sir; and I should sooner have acknowledged the favour, had I not been deeply engaged in revising, correcting, and enlarging my second volume for the press. This has fully employed me since my arrival in the country, and will take up all my time, I suppose, till my return. In the mean while, I hope you are engaged in the usefuller business of preparing your history for the public: no time, I think, should be lost, in justice to yourself as well as the public; and I should have been glad, if I could have been of half the service to you in it, that you have been of to me.

When your favour arrived, I had been three or four days wishing to have some opportunity of writing to you, but could not think of any but our old subjects. Your letter happily delivered me from the embarrassment: and I hope to hear speedily from you again. I should be very sorry to have our acquaintance, and (I hope I may add) our friendship, even suspended for the long interval of my absence from London: and we shall

one of them in this enlightened age believed in, or insisted on, the *divinity* of tythes. Their divinity is surely now no more acknowledged than that of all those laws of Moses contained in the Levitic Code, which were abolished on the introduction of Christianity. S.

meet

meet there, I trust, on my return, as old friends that know, and therefore value each other. In that confidence I remain, dear Sir,

Your favoured and obedient Friend and Servant,

J. WHITAKER.

P. S. Salmasius's derivation of our clerical cassocks from the Gaulish caracallæ, I think is one of those wild vagaries of etymology that have so greatly discredited the science. *Cassock* is *casul* in Armorick, a priest's cope, and *casul* and *casog* in Welsh and Irish, a cassock.

Manchester, July 20, 1773.

N° XXXVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq. at* Edinburgh.

DEAR HOLROYD, Bentinck-street, Aug. 7, 1773.

I BEG ten thousand pardons for not being dead, as I certainly ought to be. But such is my abject nature, that I had rather live in Bentinck-street, attainted and convicted of the sin of laziness, than enjoy your applause either at old Nick's or even in the Elysian Fields. After all, could you expect that I should honour with my correspondence a wild barbarian of the Bogs of Erin? Had the natives intercepted my letter, the terrors occasioned by such unknown magic characters might have been fatal to you. But now you have escaped the fury of their hospitality, and are arrived among a cee-vi-leezed nation, I may venture to renew my intercourse.

You

You tell me of a long list of dukes, lords, and chieftains of renown to whom you are introduced; were I with you, I should prefer one *David* to them all. When you are at Edinburgh, I hope you will not fail to visit the stye of that fattest of Epicurus's hogs, and inform yourself whether there remains no hope of its recovering the use of its right paw. There is another animal of *great*, though not perhaps of *equal*, and certainly not of *similar* merit, one Robertson; has he almost created the new world? Many other men you have undoubtedly seen, in the country where you are at present, who must have commanded your esteem: but when you return, if you are not very honest, you will possess great advantages over me in any dispute concerning Caledonian merit.

Boodle's and Atwood's are now no more. The last stragglers, and Godfrey Clarke in the rear of all, are moved away to their several castles; and I now enjoy, in the midst of London, a delicious solitude. My library, Kensington Gardens, and a few parties with new acquaintance who are chained to London, (among whom I reckon Goldsmith and Sir Joshua Reynolds,) fill up my time, and the monster *Ennui* preserves a very respectful distance. By the bye, your friends Batt, Sir John Russell, and Lascelles, dined with me one day before they set off; for I sometimes give the prettiest little dinner in the world. But all this composure draws near its conclusion. About the sixteenth of this month Mr. Eliot carries me away, and after picking up Mrs. Gibbon at Bath, sets me down at Port Eliot:

Eliot: there I shall certainly remain six weeks, or, in other words, to the end of September. My future motions, whether to London, Derbyshire, or a longer stay in Cornwall, (pray is not "motion to stay" rather in the Hibernian style?) will depend on the life of Port Eliot, the time of the meeting of parliament, and perhaps the impatience of Mr. Lovegrove, Lord of Lenborough. One of my pleasures in town I forgot to mention, the unexpected visit of Deyverdun, who accompanies his young lord (very young indeed!) on a two months' tour to England. He took the opportunity of the Earl's going down to the Duke of Chandos's, to spend a fortnight (nor do I recollect a more pleasant one) in Bentinck-street. They are now gone together into Yorkshire, and I think it doubtful whether I shall see him again before his return to Leipsic. It is a melancholy reflection, that while one is plagued with acquaintance at the corner of every street, real friends should be separated from each other by unsurmountable bars, and obliged to catch at a few transient moments of interview. I desire that you and my Lady (whom I most respectfully greet) would take your share of that very new and acute observation, not so large a share indeed as my Swiss friend, since nature and fortune give *us* more frequent opportunities of being together. You cannot expect news from a desert, and such is London at present. The papers give you the full harvest of public intelligence; and I imagine that the eloquent nymphs of Twickenham * communi-

* Miss Cambridges.

cate

cate all the transactions of the polite, the amorous, and the marrying world. The great pantomime of Portsmouth was universally admired; and I am angry at my own laziness in neglecting an excellent opportunity of seeing it. Foote has given us the Bankrupt, a serious and sentimental piece, with very severe strictures on the license of scandal in attacking private characters. Adieu. Forgive and epistolize me. I shall not believe you sincere in the former, unless you make Bentinck-street your inn. I fear I shall be gone; but Mrs. Ford * and the parrot will be proud to receive you and my Lady after your long peregrination, from which I expect great improvements. Has she got the brogue upon the tip of her tongue?†

N° XXXIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, Port Eliot, Sept. 10th, 1773.

BY this time you have surely finished your tour, touched at Edinburgh, where you found a letter, which you have not answered, and are now contemplating the beauties of the Weald of Sussex. I shall demand a long and particular account of your peregrinations, but will excuse it till we meet; and for the present expect only a short memorandum of your health and situation, together with that of my much-honoured friend Mrs. Holroyd.

* His housekeeper.

† Mr. and Mrs. Holroyd made a tour to Ireland and Scotland this summer.

A word

Holroyd. A word too, if you please, concerning father and sister; to the latter I enclose a receipt from Mrs. Gibbon who is now with me at Port Eliot.

Blind as you accuse me of being to the beauties of nature, I am wonderfully pleased with this country. Of her three dull notes, *ground*, *plants*, and *water*, Cornwall possesses the first and last in very high perfection. Think of a hundred solitary streams peacefully gliding between amazing cliffs on one side, and rich meadows on the other, gradually swelling by the aid of the tide into noble rivers, successively losing themselves in each other, and all at length terminating in the harbour of Plymouth, whose broad expanse is irregularly *dotted* with two-and-forty line of battle ships. In plants indeed we are deficient; and though all the gentlemen now attend to posterity, the country will for a long time be very naked. We have spent several days agreeably enough in little parties; but in general our time rolls away in complete uniformity. Our landlord possesses neither a pack of hounds, nor a stable of running horses, nor a large farm, nor a good library. The last only could interest me; but it is singular that a man of fortune, who chooses to pass nine months of the year in the country, should have none of them.

According to our present design, Mrs. Gibbon and myself return to Bath about the beginning of next month. I shall probably make but a short stay with her, and defer my Derbyshire journey till another year. Sufficient for the summer is the evil thereof, viz. one distant country excursion. Na-

tural inclination, the prosecution of my great work, and the conclusion of my Lenborough business, plead strongly in favour of London. However I desire, and one always finds time for what one really desires, to visit Sheffield-Place before the end of October, should it only be for a few days. I know several houses where I am invited to think myself at home, but I know no other where I seem inclined to accept of the invitation. I forgot to tell you, that I have declined the publication of Lord Chesterfield's Letters. The public will see them, and upon the whole, I think, with pleasure; but the family were strongly bent against it; and especially on Deyverdun's account, I deemed it more prudent to avoid making them my personal enemies.

N° XL.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mr.* HOLROYD.

Bentinck-street, Dec. 16th, 1773.

To the vulgar eye of an idle man, London is empty; but I find many pleasant companions, both dead and alive. Two or three days ago I dined at Atwood's with a very select party. Lord G. Germaine was of it, and we communed a long time. You know Lord Holland is paying Charles's debts. They amount to 140,000l. At a meeting of the creditors, his agent declared, that after deducting 6000l. a-year settled on Ste,* and a decent provi-

* The Hon. Stephen Fox, eldest son of Lord Holland.

sion

sion for his old age, the residue of his wealth amounted to no more than 90,000l. The creditors stared, till Mr. Powell declared that he owed every thing to the noble Lord; that *he happened* to have 50,000l. in long annuities, and begged that he might be permitted to supply the deficiency. How generous! Yet there are people who say the money only stood in his name. My brother Ste's son is a second Messiah, said Charles the other day. How so? Because born for the destruction of the Jews.

N° XLI.

The Same to the Same.

January 29th, 1774.

I AM now getting acquainted with authors, managers, &c. good company to know, but not to live with. Yesterday I dined at the British Coffee-house, with Garrick, Coleman, Goldsmith, Macpherson, John Hume, &c. I am this moment come from Coleman's Man of Business. We dined at the Shakespeare, and went in a body to support it. Between friends, though we got a verdict for our client, his cause was but a bad one. It is a very confused miscellany of several plays and tales; sets out brilliantly enough, but as we advance the plot grows thicker, the wit thinner, till the lucky fall of the curtain preserves us from total chaos.

Bentinck-street has visited Welbeck-street. Sappho is very happy that she is there yet: on Sheffield-Place she squints with regret and grati-

tude. Mamma consulted me about buying coals; we cannot get any round ones. Quintus is gone to head the civil war. Of Mrs. * * * * I have nothing to say. I have got my intelligence for insuring, and will immediately get the preservative against fire. Foster has sent me eight-and-twenty pair of Paris silk stockings, with an intimation that my lady wished for half-a-dozen. They are much at her service; but if she will look into David Hume's Essay on National Characters, she will see that I durst not offer them to a Queen of Spain. *Sachez qu'une reine d'Espagne n'a point de jambes.* Adieu.

N° XLII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

1774.

WE have conquered; * * * was amazed at the tempest just ready to break over his head. He does not desire to go to law, wishes to live in peace, has no complaints to make, hopes for a little indulgence. *Hugonin is now in the attitude* of St. Michael trampling upon Satan; he holds him down, till Andrews has prepared *a little chain of adamant* to bind the foul fiend. In return, receive my congratulation on your Irish victory. Batt told me yesterday, as from good authority, that administration designed a second attempt this session; but to-day I have it from much better, that they always discouraged it, and that it was *totally an Hibernian scheme.* You remark that I saw Batt. He passed

two

two hours with me; a pleasant man! He and Sir John Russell dine with me *next week:* you will *have both their portraits; the originals are engaged.*

N° XLIII.

The Same to the Same.

February, 1774.

DID you get down safe and early? Is my Lady in good spirits and humour? You do not deserve that she should, for hurrying her away. Does Maria coquet with Divedown?* Adieu. Bentinck-street looks very dismal. You may suppose that nothing very important can have occurred since you left town: but I will send you some account of America after Monday, though indeed my anxiety about an old manor takes away much of my attention from a new continent. The mildness of Godfrey Clarke is roused into military fury; he is but an old Tory, and you only suppose yourself an old Whig. I alone am a true Englishman, Philosopher, and Whig.

N° XLIV.

The Same to the Same.

Boodle's, Wednesday Evening, March 16th, 1774.

I WAS this morning with * * *. He was positive that the attempt to settle the preliminaries of arbitration by letters, would lead us on to the

* Rev. Dr. Dive Downes.

middle of the summer, and that a meeting was the only practicable measure. I acquiesced, and we blended his epistle and yours into one, which goes by this post. If you can contrive to suit to it your Oxford journey, your presence at the meeting would be received as the descent of a guardian angel.

Very little that is satisfactory has transpired of America. On Monday Lord North moved for leave to bring in a bill to remove the customs and courts of justice from Boston to New Salem; a step so detrimental to the former town, as must soon reduce it to your own terms; and yet of so mild an appearance, that it was agreed to, without a division, and almost without a debate. Something more is, however, intended, and a committee is appointed to inquire into the general state of America. But administration keep their secret as well as that of free masonry, and, as Hippesley Coxe profanely suggests, for the same reason.

Don't you remember that in our pantheon walks we admired the *modest beauty* of Mrs. * * * *? *Eh bien*, alas! she is * * *. You ask me with whom? With * * * *, of the Guards; both the * * * *'s; * * * *, a steward of * * * *'s, her first love, and half the town besides. A meeting of * * * *'s friends assembled about a week ago, to consult of the best method of acquainting him with his frontal honours. Edmund Burke was named as the orator, and communicated the transaction in a most eloquent speech.

N. B. The same lady, who at public dinners appeared

peared to have the most delicate appetite, was accustomed in her own apartment to feast on pork-steaks and sausages, and to swill porter till she was dead drunk. * * * is abused by the * * * family, has been bullied by * * *, and can prove himself a Cornuto, to the satisfaction of every one but a court of justice. Oh rare matrimony!

N° XLV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

March 29th, 1774.

America. Had I written Saturday night, as I once intended, fire and sword, oaths of allegiance and high treason tried in England, in consequence of the refusal, would have formed my letter. Lord North, however, opened a most lenient prescription last night; and the utmost attempt towards a new settlement seemed to be no more than investing the governors with a greater share of executive power, nomination of civil officers, (judges, however, for life,) and some regulations of juries. The Boston port bill passed the Lords last night; some lively conversation, but no division.

Bentinck-street. Rose Fuller was against the Boston port bill, and against his niece's going to Boodle's masquerade. He was laughed at in the first instance, but succeeded in the second. Sappho and Fanny very indifferent (as mamma says) about going. They seem of a different opinion. Adieu.

N° XLVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, April 2d, 1774.

YOU owe me a letter; so this extra goes only to acquaint you with a misfortune that has just happened to poor Clarke, and which he really considers as such, the loss of a very excellent father. The blow was sudden; a thin little man, as abstemious as a hermit, was destroyed by a stroke of apoplexy in his coach as he was going to dinner. He appeared perfectly well, and only two days before had very good-naturedly dined with us at a tavern, a thing he had not done for many years before. I am the only person Clarke wishes to see, except his own family; and I pass a great part of the day with him. A line from you would be kindly received.

Great news, you see, from India. Tanjour four hundred thousand pounds to the Company. Suja Dowla six hundred thousand. Tyger Roch is certainly got off from the Cape to Mauritius in a French ship. Adieu.

N° XLVII.

The Same to the Same.

April 13th, 1774.

AT length I am a little more at liberty. Godfrey Clarke went out of town this morning. Instead of going directly into Derbyshire, where he would have been overwhelmed with visits, &c. he has

has taken his sister, brother, and aunts to a villa near Farnham, in which he has the happiness of having no neighbourhood. If my esteem and friendship for Godfrey had been capable of any addition, it would have been very much increased by the manner in which he felt and lamented his father's death. He is now in very different circumstances than before; instead of an easy and ample allowance, he has taken possession of a great estate, with low rents and high incumbrances. I hope the one may make amends for the other: under your conduct I am sure they would, and I have freely offered him your assistance, in case he should wish to apply for it.

In the mean time I must not forget my own affairs, which seem to be covered with inextricable perplexity. * * *, as I mentioned about a century ago, promised to see * * * and his attorney, and to oil the wheels of the arbitration. As yet I have not heard from him. I have some thoughts of writing *myself* to the jockey, stating the various steps of the affair, and offering him, with polite firmness, the *immediate* choice of Chancery or arbitration.

For the time, however, I forgot all these difficulties, in the present enjoyment of Deyverdun's company; and I glory in thinking, that although my house is small, it is just of a sufficient size to hold my real friends, male and *female;* among the latter my Lady holds the very first place.

We are all quiet.—American business is suspended and almost forgot. The other day we had a brisk

a brisk report of a Spanish war. It was said they had taken one of our Leeward Islands. It since turns out, that we are the invaders, but the invasion is trifling.

Bien obligé non (at present) for your invitation. I wish my Lady and you would come up to our masquerade the third of May. The finest thing ever seen. We sup in a transparent temple that costs four hundred and fifty pounds.

N° XLVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

DEAR HOLROYD, April 21st, 1774.

I BEGIN to flag, and though you already reproach me as a bad correspondent, I much fear that I shall every week become a more hardened sinner. Besides the occasional obstructions of Clarke and Deyverdun, I must intreat you to consider, with your usual candour, 1. The aversion to epistolary conversation, which it has pleased the dæmon to implant in my nature. 2. That I am a very fine gentleman, a subscriber to the masquerade, where you and my Lady ought to come, and am now writing at Boodle's, in a fine velvet coat, with ruffles of my lady's choosing, &c. 3. That the aforesaid fine gentleman is likewise an historian; and in truth, when I am writing a page, I do not only think it a sufficient reason for delay, but even consider myself as writing for you, and that, much more to the purpose than if I were sending you the little tattle of the town, of which indeed there

is

is none stirring. With regard to America, the Minister seems moderate, and the House obedient. * * *'s last letter, by some unaccountable accident, had never reached me; so that your's, in every instance, amazed me. I immediately dispatched to him groans and approbation. * * *, however, gives me very little uneasiness. I see that he is a bully, and that I have a stick. But the cursed business of Lenborough, in the midst of study, dissipation, and friendship, at times almost distracts me. I am surely in a worse situation than before I sold the estate, and what distresses me is, that

His ego nec metas rerum, nec tempora pono.—

Both Deyverdun and Clarke wish to be remembered to you. The former, who has more taste for the country than * * * *, could wish to visit you, but he sets out in a few days for the continent with Lord Midleton. Adieu.

N° XLIX.

The Same to the Same.

DEAR HOLROYD, May 4th, 1774.

LAST night was the triumph of Boodle's. Our masquerade cost two thousand guineas; a sum that might have fertilized a province (I speak in your own style) vanished in a few hours, but not without leaving behind it the fame of the most splendid and elegant *fête* that was perhaps ever given in a seat of the arts and opulence. It would be

be as difficult to describe the magnificence of the scene, as it would be easy to record the humour of the night. The one was above, the other below, all relation. I left the Pantheon about five this morning, rose at ten, took a good walk, and returned home to a more rational entertainment of Batt, Sir John Russell, and Lascelles, who dined with me. They have left me this moment; and were I to enumerate the things said of Sheffield, it would form a much longer letter than I have any inclination to write. Let it suffice, that Sir John means to pass in Sussex the interval of the two terms. Every thing, in a word, goes on very pleasantly, except the terrestrial business of Lenborough. Last Saturday se'nnight I wrote to * * * *, to press him to see * * *, and urge the arbitration. He has not *condescended* to answer me. All is a dead calm, sometimes more fatal than a storm. For God's sake send me advice. Adieu.

N° L.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, Boodle's, May 24th, 1774.

Do you remember that there exists in the world one Edward Gibbon, a housekeeper, in Bentinck-street? If the standard of writing and of affection were the same, I am sure he would ill-deserve it. I do not wish to discover, how many days (I am afraid I ought to use another word) have elapsed since the date of my last, or even of your last letter, and yet such is the sluggish nature of the beast, that

that I am afraid nothing but the arrival of Mrs. Bonfoy, and the expectation of Mr. Eliot, could have roused me from my lethargy. The Lady gave me great satisfaction, by her general account of your health and spirits, but communicated some uneasiness, by the mention of a little encounter, in the style of one of Don Quixote's, but which proved, I hope, as trifling as you at first imagined it. For my own part, I am well in mind and body, busy with my books, (which may perhaps produce something next year, either to tire or amuse the world,) and every day more satisfied with my present mode of life, which I always believed was calculated to make me happy. My only remaining uneasiness is Lenborough, which is not terminated. By Holroyd's advice, I rather try what may be obtained by a little more patience, than rush at once into the horrors of Chancery. But let us talk of something else. Mrs. Porten grows younger every day. You remember, I think, in Newman-street, an agreeable woman, Miss W * * *. The under-secretary* is seriously in love with her, and seriously uneasy that his precarious situation precludes him from happiness. We shall soon see which will get the better, love or reason. I bet three to two on love.

Guess my surprise, when Mrs. Gibbon of Northamptonshire suddenly communicated her arrival. I immediately went to Surrey-street, where she lodged, but though it was no more than half an

* Sir Stanier Porten.

hour,

hour after nine, the Saint had finished her evening devotions, and was already retired to rest. Yesterday morning (by appointment) I breakfasted with her at eight o'clock, dined with her to-day at two in Newman-street, and am just returned from setting her down. She is, in truth, a very great curiosity: her dress and figure exceed any thing we had at the masquerade: her language and ideas belong to the last century. However, in point of religion she was rational; that is to say, silent. I do not believe that she asked a single question, or said the least thing concerning it. To me she behaved with great cordiality, and *in her way* expressed a great regard.

Mrs. Porten tells me, that she has just written to you. She ought to go to a masquerade once a year. Did you think her such a girl?

I am, dear Madam, most truly yours.

N° LI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Boodle's, May 24th, 1774.

I WROTE three folio pages to you this morning, and yet you complain. Have reason, and have mercy; consider all the excellent reasons for silence which I gave you in one of my last, and expect my arrival in Sussex, when I shall talk more in a quarter of an hour than I could write in a day. *A propos* of that arrival; never pretend to allure me, by painting in odious colours the dust of London. I love the dust, and whenever I move into the

the Weald, it is to visit you and my Lady, and not your trees. About this-day-month I mean to give you *a visitation*. I leave it to Guise, Clarke, and the other light-horse, to prance down for a day or two. They all talk of mounting, but will not fix the day. Sir John Russell, whom I salute, has brought you, I suppose, all the news of Versailles. Let me only add, that the Mesdames, by attending their father, have both got the small-pox. I can make nothing of * * *, or his lawyer. You will swear at the shortness of this letter.—Swear.

N° LII.

The Same to the Same.

Saturday Evening, August 27th, 1774.

By your submission to the voice of reason, you eased me of a heavy load of anxiety. I did not like your enterprise. * * * * * * * * *. As to papers, I will shew you that I can keep them safe till we meet. What think you of the Turks and Russians? Romanzow is a great man. He wrote an account of his amazing success to Mouskin Pouskin here, and declared his intention of retiring as soon as he had conducted the army home; desiring that Pouskin would send him the best plan he could procure of an English gentleman's farm. In his answer, Pouskin promised to get it; but added, that at the same time he should send the Empress *a plan of Blenheim*. A handsome compliment, I think. My Lady and Maria, as usual.

N°

N° LIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Bentinck-street, Sept. 10th, 1774.

SINCE Heberden is returned, I think the road lies plain before you, I mean the turnpike road; the only party which in good sense can be embraced is, without delay, to bring my Lady to Bentinck-street, where you may inhabit two or three nights, and have any advice (Turton, Heberden, &c.) which the town may afford, in a case that most assuredly ought not to be trifled with. Do this as you value our good opinion. The Cantabs are strongly in the same sentiments. There can be no apprehensions of late hours, &c. as none of Mrs. Holroyd's raking acquaintance are in town. * * * * You give me no account of the works. When do you inhabit the library? *Turn over—great things await you.*

IT is surely infinite condescension for a senator to bestow his attention on the affairs of a juryman. A senator? Yes, Sir, at last

——*Quoi! . . . . Divûm promittere nemo*
Auderet, volvenda dies, en attulit ultro.——

Yesterday morning, about half an hour after seven, as I was destroying an army of Barbarians, I heard a double rap at the door, and my friend Mr. Eliot was soon introduced. After some idle conversation he told me, that if I was desirous of being in parliament, he had an *independent* seat very much at my service. * * * * This is a fine prospect opening

opening upon me, and if next spring I should take my seat, and publish my book, it will be a very memorable æra in my life. I am ignorant whether my borough will be Leskeard or St. Germains. You despise boroughs, and fly at nobler game. Adieu.

N° LIV.

The Same to the Same.

December 2d, 1774.

I SEND you inclosed a dismal letter from Hugonin. Return it without delay, with observations. A manifesto has been sent to * * *, which must, I think, produce immediate peace or war. Adieu. We shall have a warm day on the address next Monday. A number of young members! Whitshed, *a dry man*, assured me, that he heard one of them ask, whether the king always sat in that chair, pointing to the Speaker's. Adieu.

N° LV.

The Same to the Same.

Boodle's, Jan. 31st, 1775.

SOMETIMES people do not write because they are too idle, and sometimes because they are too busy. The former was usually my case, but at present it is the latter. The fate of Europe and America seems fully sufficient to take up the time of one man; and especially of a man who gives up a great deal of time for the purpose of public and private

 information.

information. I think I have sucked Mauduit and Hutcheson very dry; and if my confidence was equal to my eloquence, and my eloquence to my knowledge, perhaps I might make no very intolerable speaker. At all events, I fancy I shall try to expose myself.

Semper ego auditor tantum? nunquamne reponam?

For my own part, I am more and more convinced that we have both the right and the power on our side, and that, though the effort may be accompanied with some melancholy circumstances, we are now arrived at the decisive moment of preserving or of losing for ever, both our trade and empire. We expect next Thursday or Friday to be a very great day. Hitherto we have been chiefly employed in reading papers, and rejecting petitions. Petitions were brought from London, Bristol, Norwich, &c. framed by party, and designed to delay. By the aid of some parliamentary quirks, they have been all referred to a separate inactive committee, which Burke calls a committee of oblivion, and are now considered as dead in law. I could write you fifty little House of Commons stories, but from their number and nature they suit better a conference than a letter. Our general divisions are about two hundred and fifty to eighty or ninety. Adieu.

N° LVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, London, Jan. 31st, 1775.

AN idle man has no time, and a busy man very little. As yet the House of Commons turns out very well to me, and though it should never prove of any real benefit to me, I find it at least a very agreeable coffee-house. We are plunging every day deeper and deeper into the great business of America; and I have hitherto been a zealous, though silent, friend to the cause of government, which, *in this instance*, I think the cause of England. I passed about ten days, as I designed, at Uppark. I found Lord * * * and fourscore fox-hounds.

The troubles of Beriton are perfectly composed, and the insurgents reduced to a state, though not a temper, of submission. You may suppose I heard a great deal of Petersfield. Lutterell means to convict your friend of bribery, to transport him for using a second time old stamps, and to prove that Petersfield is still a part of the manor of Beriton. I remain an impartial spectator. I am, dear Madam, most truly yours.

N° LVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

February 8th, 1775.

I AM not ———, according to your charitable wishes, because I have not acted; there was such

an inundation of speakers, young speakers in every sense of the word, both on Thursday in the grand committee, and Monday on the report to the House, that neither Lord George Germaine nor myself could find room for a single word. The principal men both days were Fox and Wedderburne, on the opposite sides; the latter displayed his usual talents; the former, taking the vast compass of the question before us, discovered powers for regular debate, which neither his friends hoped, nor his enemies dreaded. We voted an address, (three hundred and four to one hundred and five,) of lives and fortunes, declaring Massachussets Bay in a state of rebellion. More troops, but I fear not enough, go to America, to make an army of ten thousand men at Boston; three generals Howe, Burgoyne, and Clinton. In a few days we stop the ports of New England. I cannot write volumes; but I am more and more convinced, that with firmness all may go well; yet I sometimes doubt. I am now writing with ladies, (Sir S. Porten and his bride,) and two card-tables, in the library. As to my silence, judge of my situation by last Monday. I am on the Grenvillian committee of Downton. We always sit from ten to three and a half; after which, that day, I went into the House, and sat till three in the morning. Adieu.

N° LVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Feb. 25th, 1775.

WE go on with regard to America, if we can be said to go on; for on last Monday a conciliatory motion of allowing the Colonies to tax themselves, was introduced by Lord North, in the midst of lives and fortunes, war and famine. We went into the House in confusion, every moment expecting that the Bedfords would fly into rebellion against those measures. Lord North rose six times to appease the storm, but all in vain; till at length Sir Gilbert declared for administration, and the troops all rallied under their proper standard. On Wednesday we had the Middlesex election. I was a patriot; sat by the Lord Mayor, who spoke well, and with temper, but before the end of the debate fell fast asleep. I am still a mute; it is more tremendous than I imagined; the great speakers fill me with despair, the bad ones with terror.

When do you move? My Lady answered like a woman of sense, spirit, and good nature. Neither she nor I could bear it. She was right, and the Duchess of Braganza would have made the same answer. Adieu.

N° LIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON.

DEAR MADAM, March 30th, 1775.

I HARDLY know how to take up the pen. I talked in my last of two or three posts, and I am

almost ashamed to calculate how many have elapsed. I will endeavour for the future to be less scandalous. Only believe that my heart is innocent of the laziness of my hand. I do not mean to have recourse to the stale and absurd excuse of business, though I have really had a very considerable hurry of new parliamentary business: one day, for instance, of seventeen hours, from ten in the morning till between three and four the next morning. It is, upon the whole, an agreeable improvement in my life, and forms just the mixture of business, of study, and of society, which I always imagined I should, and now find I do like. Whether the House of Commons may ever prove of benefit to myself or country, is another question. As yet I have been mute. In the course of our American affairs, I have sometimes had a wish to speak, but though I felt tolerably prepared as to the matter, I dreaded exposing myself in the manner, and remained in my seat safe, but inglorious. Upon the whole, (though I still believe I shall try,) I doubt whether Nature, not that in some instances I am ungrateful, has given me the talents of an orator, and I feel that I came into parliament much too late to exert them. Do you hear of Port Eliot coming to Bath? and, above all, do you hear of Charles-street* coming to Bentinck-street, in its way to Essex, &c.

Adieu. Dear Madam,
I am most truly yours.

* Mrs. Gibbon's residence at Bath.

N°

N° LX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON.

House of Commons,
DEAR MADAM, May 2d, 1775.

I ACCEPT of the Pomeranian Lady with gratitude and pleasure, and shall be impatient to form an acquaintance with her. My presentations at St. James's passed graciously. My dinner at Twickenham was attended with less ceremony and more amusement. If they turned out Lord North to-morrow, they would still leave him one of the best companions in the kingdom. By this time I suppose the Eliots are with you. I am sure you will say every thing kind and proper on the occasion. I am glad to hear of the approbation of my constituents for my vote on the Middlesex election. On the subject of America, I have been something more of a courtier. You know, I suppose, that Holroyd is just stepped over to Ireland for a fortnight. He passed three days with me on his way. Deyverdun had left me just before your letter arrived, which I shall soon have an opportunity of conveying to him. Though, I flatter myself, he broke from me with some degree of uneasiness, the engagement could not be declined. At the end of four years he has an annuity of one hundred pounds for life, and may for the remainder of his days enjoy a decent independence in that country, which a philosopher would perhaps prefer to the rest of Europe. For my own part, after the hurry of the

town and of parliament, I am now retired to my villa in Bentinck-street, which I begin to find a very pleasing solitude, at least as well as if it were two hundred miles from London; because when I am tired of the Roman Empire, I can laugh away the evening at Foote's theatre, which I could not do in Hampshire or Cornwall. I am, dear Madam, most truly yours,

N° LXI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Bentinck-street, August 1st, 1775.

YOUR apprehensions of a precipitate work, &c. are perfectly groundless. I should be much more addicted to a contrary extreme. The *head* is now printing: true, but it was written last year and the year before. The first chapter has been composed *de nouveau three times;* the second *twice*, and all the others have undergone reviews, corrections, &c. As to the tail, it is perfectly formed and digested, and (were I so much given to self-content and haste) it is almost all written. The ecclesiastical part, for instance, is written out in fourteen sheets, which I mean to *refondre* from beginning to end. As to the friendly critic, it is very difficult to find one who has leisure, candour, freedom and knowledge sufficient. However, Batt and Deyverdun have read and observed. After all, the public is the best critic. I print no more than five hundred copies of the first edition; and the second

(as

(as it happens frequently to my betters) may receive many improvements. So much for Rome. We have nothing new from America. But I can venture to assure you, that administration is now as unanimous and decided as the occasion requires. Something will be done this year; but in the spring the force of the country will be exerted to the utmost. Scotch Highlanders, Irish Papists, Hanoverians, Canadians, Indians, &c. will all in various shapes be employed. Parliament meets the first week in November. I think his Catholic Majesty may be satisfied with his summer's amusement. The Spaniards fought with great bravery, and made a fine retreat; but our Algerine friends surpassed them as much in conduct as in number. Adieu.

The Duchess has stopped Foote's piece. She sent for him to Kingston-house, and threatened, bribed, argued, and wept for about two hours. He assured her, that if the Chamberlain was obstinate, he should publish it, with a dedication to her Grace.

N° LXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, London, August, 1775.

WILL you accept my present literary business as an excuse for my not writing? I think you will be in the wrong if you do, since I was just as idle before. At all events, however, it is better to say three words, than to be totally a dumb dog. *A propos*

propos of dog, but not of dumb: your Pomeranian is the comfort of my life; pretty, impertinent, fantastical, all that a young lady of fashion ought to be. I flatter myself that our passion is reciprocal. I am just at present engaged in a great historical work; no less than a History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; with the first volume of which I may very possibly oppress the public next winter. It would require some pages to give a more particular idea of it; but I shall only say in general, that the subject is curious, and never yet treated as it deserves; and that during some years it has been in my thoughts, and even under my pen. Should the attempt fail, it must be by the fault of the execution.

Adieu. Dear Madam,
believe me most truly yours.

N° LXIII.

WILLIAM STRAHAN, *Esq.* *to* EDW. GIBBON, *Esq.*

SIR, New-street, Sunday morning, Oct. 8th, 1775.

I WAS desirous of taking an early opportunity of paying my respects to you, to return you my best thanks for the pleasure I have received from the perusal of your work, which I have read almost as far as it is advanced. My opinion of it, I shall beg leave, with all submission, to lay before you in a few words.

The language is the most correct, most elegant, and most expressive I have ever read; but that, in my mind, is its least praise.

The work abounds with the justest maxims of sound

sound policy, which, while they shew you to be a perfect master of your subject, discover your intimate knowledge of human nature, and the liberality of your sentiments.

Your characters, in particular, are drawn in a masterly manner, with the utmost accuracy and precision; and, as far as I am able to judge, in strict conformity to historic truth.

In short, so able and so finished a performance hath hardly ever before come under my inspection: and though I will not take upon me absolutely to pronounce in what manner it will be received at first by a capricious and giddy public, I will venture to say, it will ere long make a distinguished figure among the many valuable works that do honour to the present age; will be translated into most of the modern languages, and will remain a lasting monument of the genius and ability of the writer.

I am, with the greatest esteem and respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient and faithful servant,

WILL. STRAHAN.

N° LXIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Bentinck-street, Oct. 14th, 1775.

I SEND you two pieces of intelligence from the best authority, and which, unless you hear them from some other quarter, I do not wish you should talk much about. 1st, When the Russians arrive (if

(if they refresh themselves in England or Ireland,) will you go and see their camp? We have great hopes of getting a body of these Barbarians. In consequence of some very plain advances, King George, with his own hand, wrote a very polite epistle to sister Kitty, requesting her friendly assistance. Full powers and instructions were sent at the same time to Gunning, to agree for any force between five and twenty thousand men, *carte blanche* for the terms; on condition, however, that they should serve, not as auxiliaries, but as mercenaries, and that the Russian general should be absolutely under the command of the British. They daily and hourly expect a messenger, and hope to hear that the business is concluded. The worst of it is, that the Baltic will soon be frozen up, and that it must be late next year before they can get to America. 2. In the mean time we are not quite easy about Canada; and even if it should be safe from an attack, we cannot flatter ourselves with the expectation of bringing down that martial people on the Back Settlements. The priests are ours; the gentlemen very prudently wait the event, and are disposed to join the stronger party; but the same lawless spirit and impatience of government which have infected our Colonies, are gone forth among the Canadian peasants, over whom, since the conquest, the noblesse have lost much of their ancient influence. Another thing which will please and surprise, is the assurance which I received from a man who might tell me a lie, but who could not be mistaken, that no arts,

no

no management whatsoever, have been used to procure the addresses which fill the Gazette, and that Lord North was as much surprised at the first that came up, as we could be at Sheffield. We shall have, I suppose, some brisk skirmishing in parliament, but the business will soon be decided by our superior weight of fire. *A propos*, I believe there has been some vague but serious conversation about *calling out the militia*. The new levies go on very slowly in Ireland. The Dissenters, both there and here, are violent and active. Adieu. I embrace my Lady and Maria.

N° LXV.

GEORGE LEWIS SCOTT, *Esq. to* E. GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR, December 29th, 1775.

I AM obliged to you for the liberty of perusing part of your work. What I have read, has given me a great deal of pleasure. I have found but few slips of the press, or the pen.

The style of the work is clear, and every way agreeable; and I dare say you will be thought to have written with all due moderation and decency with respect to received (at least once received) opinions. The notes and quotations will add not a little to the value of the work. The authority of French writers, so familiar to you, has not infected you, however, with the fault of superficial and careless quotations. I find, since I saw you, that I must be in the chair at the Excise Office to-morrow; which service will confine me too much for a week,

a week, to permit me to wait upon you so soon as I could wish.

I am very truly, dear Sir,
Your most obedient and most humble Servant.

N° LXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

London, Jan. 18th, 1776.

How do you do? Are you alive? Are you buried under mountains of snow? I write merely to triumph in the superiority of my own situation, and to rejoice in my own prudence, in not going down to Sheffield-place, as I seriously, but foolishly, intended to do last week. We proceed triumphantly with the Roman Empire, and shall certainly make our appearance before the end of next month. I have nothing public. You know we have got eighteen thousand Germans from Hesse, Brunswick, and Hesse Darmstadt. I think our meeting will be lively; a spirited minority, and a desponding majority. The higher people are placed, the more gloomy are their countenances, the more melancholy their language. You may call this cowardice, but I fear it arises from their knowledge (a late knowledge) of the difficulty and magnitude of the business. Quebec is not *yet* taken. I hear that Carleton is determined never to capitulate with rebels. A glorious resolution, if it were supported with fifty thousand men! Adieu. I embrace my Lady and Maria. Make my excuses to the latter, for having neglected her birth-day.

N°

N° LXVII.

The Same to the Same.

January 29th, 1776.

HARES, &c. arrived safe; were received with thanks, and devoured with appetite. Send more *(id est)* of hares. I believe, in my last I forgot saying any thing of the son of Fergus; his letters reached him. What think you of the season? Siberia, is it not? A pleasant campaign in America. I read and pondered your last, and think that, in the place of Lord George Germaine, you might perhaps succeed; but I much fear that our Leaders have not a genius which can act at the distance of three thousand miles. You know, that a large draught of Guards are just going to Ameriea; poor dear creatures! We are met; but no business. Next week may be busy; Scotch militia, &c. Roman Empire (first part) will be finished in a week or fortnight. At last, I have heard Texier; wonderful! Embrace my Lady. The weather too cold to turn over the page. Adieu.

Since this, I received your last, and honour your care of the old women: a respectable name, which, in spite of my Lady, may suit Judges, Bishops, Generals, &c. I am rejoiced to hear of Maria's inoculation. I know not when you have done so wise a thing. You may depend upon getting an excellent house. Adieu.

N°

N° LXVIII.

Mr. WHITAKER *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR, Saturday, Feb. 24th, 1776.

I HAVE just now received the favour of your History and I would not delay the acknowledgment. I expect equal information and entertainment from it. In that expectation I shall sit down to it next week; and, when I have gone over the whole, you shall hear from me again, without flattery, though not perhaps without partiality. In the meantime, if I thought I might trouble you so soon after my late tax upon you, I would send you a dozen of covers, and beg you to take the trouble of addressing them to Miss Holme, of Brownhill, Rochdale, Lancashire. She is not a mere goddess in Platonic vision. And, if you knew what an elegant, sensible, and spirited correspondence betwixt her and a Welsh lady you would promote by the flourish of your pen, you would run it over a few half-sheets with pleasure. But I think I have no right to ask for the one, and shall therefore decline sending the others.

Your History found me engaged in another History, a work long designed by me, but now executing on a new plan, and therefore with a new title. It is to be called The Military History of the Romans in Britain, and will consequently take in all their military transactions here, and endeavour to place them in new points of view. I have already finished two chapters upon this model, and have

have gone through the two expeditions of Cæsar in them. But I find one inconvenience attending my departure from the common line of relation with regard to these invasions, which I do not like and yet know not how to avoid. I am obliged to defend my own accounts in some formal dissertations at the end. And, if I go on as I have begun, my Appendix will be half as large as my History.

I hope your anti-American spirits, Sir, are in a higher flow than they were when I had last the pleasure of hearing from you. Manchester has taken a decided part against the Americans. And, having beaten the petitioners out of the field in action, we are now attacking them in the London papers, and driving them from their last refuge there.

I remain, Dear Sir,
Your most devoted and very humble
Friend and Servant,
J. WHITAKER.

N° LXIX.

Mr. WHITAKER *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

SIR, No. 29, Fetter-lane, March 26th.

IT was not till yesterday, that I knew to whom I was indebted for your obliging communication of last week. It was, before, a sort of fairy favour. And I supposed, with regret, that it was in vain to inquire after the invisible hand which had reached it out to me. But yesterday, casting a casual look upon the outer cover, I there saw what I had not

observed before, a note from Mr. White, the bookseller. This naturally lead me to inquire of him. And from him I had the satisfaction to learn, that my unknown and friendly correspondent was Mr. Gibbon. To Mr. Gibbon therefore I return my cordial thanks for the obliging manner in which he speaks of the History of Manchester, and my more cordial for his two remarks upon it. These have pointed out a track of thinking, with which I was but little acquainted before. And I should be glad to enter upon it in company with such a guide, and pursue it to its termination. Cannot Mr. Gibbon and I, therefore, contrive to spend an hour together upon the subject? I shall be very happy in waiting upon Mr. Gibbon at his own appointment, and either in Bentinck-street, Fetter-lane, or a coffee-house. And I shall be glad to cultivate the acquaintance of a gentleman, who seems to be, what few even of our professed scholars are, very conversant with the earlier history of our country.

In the meantime I have the pleasure to subscribe myself Mr. Gibbon's

obliged and most devoted
humble Servant,
J. WHITAKER.

N° LXX.

Mr. WHITAKER *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR, Manchester, April 21st, 1776.

I HAVE just finished your History: and I sit down to thank you for it a second time. You have laid

laid open the interior principles of the Roman Constitution with great learning, and shewn their operation on the general body of the Empire with great judgment. Your work therefore will do you high honour. You never speak feebly, except when you come upon British ground, and never weakly, except when you attack Christianity. In the former case, you seem to me to want information. And, in the latter, you plainly want the common candour of a citizen of the world for the religious system of your country. Pardon me, Sir, but, much as I admire your abilities, greatly as I respect your friendship, I cannot bear without indignation your sarcastic slyness upon Christianity, and cannot see without pity your determined hostility to the Gospel. But I leave the subject to beg a favour of you. After so open a declaration, I pay a great compliment to the friendliness of your spirit, to solicit from you any favour.

I have inclosed you a printed paper, written by myself, and relating to a Bill for this town, which is now in the House. It was drawn up with the utmost plainness, in order to be level to the comprehensions of the persons to whom it was addressed. And I take the liberty of sending it to you, to inform you of the nature and complexion of the Bill. You may depend upon all the facts in it. And if you think the arguments convincing in themselves, and the cause for my sake worthy of your interposition, you will perhaps think it requisite, either by application to the Committee or by an overture to the House, to get a couple of

restraining paragraphs inserted in the Bill; that shall make every subscriber to the improvements a commissioner under the Act, and oblige the commissioners to finish all the improvements in a limited time. In doing this, you will check a spirit of tyranny, that has shewn itself very powerfully in this region of mercantile equality, and confine it within proper bounds. And you will particularly oblige your friend, who, with a great promptness to submit to the authority of his legal superiors, feels a greater reluctance to truckle to the assumed dominion of his equals.

I write to Sir Thomas Egerton by this post, and upon this occasion. But, as his friends here are divided upon the matter, I am doubtful whether he will choose to interpose in it. I shall write also to one or two other friends of mine in the House. But as I have not the same claim of friendship upon them, which you allow me to have upon you, I rely principally upon your interposition. And if you can serve the thinking part of this town, if you can oblige me, you will (I am convinced) do both.

Let me add to this favour, which is merely a public and political one, another of a more private and tender nature. Will you make some of your servants fold me up a dozen covers, and inscribe them yourself to Miss Holme, Brownhill, Rochdale, Lancashire? If you will, you will heighten the former favour, and make me still more

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

J. WHITAKER.

N°

N° LXXI.

Mr. WHITAKER *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR, Manchester, May 11th, 1776.

I THANK you for your franks. And I thank you still more for your friendly return to my last. You received my application to you about the business in parliament, with your usual kindness. I wrote to others of my friends in the House at the same time. And I carried the great point which I aimed up. You also received my animadversions upon your History with candour. I was particularly pointed, I believe, in what I said concerning the religious part of it. I wrote from my feelings at the time; and was perhaps the less inclined to suppress those feelings from friendliness, because I had two favours to beg of you. I hope, I shall ever be attached, with every power of my judgment and my affection, to that glorious system of truth, which is the vital principle of happiness to my soul in time and in eternity. And in this I act not from any "restraints of profession." I should despise myself, if I did. I act from the fullest conviction of a mind, that has been a good deal exercised in inquiries into truth, and that has shewn (I fancy) a strong spirit of rational scepticism in rejecting and refuting a variety of opinions, which have passed current for ages in our national history.

With regard to what I said concerning your British accounts, I meant not to blame you, either for not saying all that you knew concerning our island, or for not bringing in the intimations of

Richard on Ossian. I blamed you only for not noticing some particulars, that made a necessary part of your narration, and are mentioned by the best authorities. And I remember particularly, that in your description of the Empire about the time of Severus, and in your short intimations concerning the state of the towns within it, you specify only London and York as remarkable towns in Britain, though Tacitus and Dio give us such an account of Camulodunum, and though Chester appears from an inscription and a coin to have been then a colony. And in the description of those two which you mention you take no notice, I think, of the sweet and pleasant situation of London, so strikingly marked by Tacitus, and of the Temple of Bellona, and of the Palatium or Domus Palatina, in York, so expressly specified by Spartian. You omit also the fine baths of Britain, so plainly pointed out in the Thermæ of Ptolemy, and the Aquæ Solis of Antoninus's Itinerary, and so celebrated by Solinus. You equally omit the latter's Temple of Apollo and Minerva, at the same colony of Bath. And you also omit the colony of Gloucester, though demonstrated to be one by an inscription; and the colony of Caer Gwent, in Monmouthshire, though particularized by Antoninus's Itinerary, and exhibiting such remains in Giraldus Cambrensis.* These were some of the remarks that forced themselves

* Mr. Whitaker's eagerness to display his erudition as a British Antiquarian, seems to have occasioned a forgetfulness that Mr. Gibbon did not affect that character; that as the historian of Rome his subject could not be supposed to embrace the details of British antiquities. S.

upon

upon my mind, as I read your work. Others also arose of a different nature and inferior importance, as that the native language of Gaul and Britain was driven by the Romans to the hills and mountains; that the Druids borrowed money upon bonds payable in the other world, &c. The former is undoubtedly a mistake in the island, and I believe, is equally so on the continent. And the latter, I apprehend, has only the frivolous authority of Cluverius or some such writer for its ground-work. From these and other particulars it was, that I received the impression which I ventured to declare in my last. And I am ready to acknowledge my mistake, if I am wrong.

These however, if never so true, are but trifles light as air in my estimation, when they are compared with what I think the great blot of your work. You have there exhibited Deism in a new shape, and in one that is more likely to affect the uninstructed million, than the reasoning form which she has usually worn. You seem to me like another Tacitus, revived with all his animosity against Christianity, his strong philosophical spirit of sentiment, and more than his superiority to the absurdities of heathenism. And you will have the dishonour (pardon me, Sir) of being ranked by the folly of scepticism, that is working so powerfully at present, among the most distinguished deists of the age. I have long suspected the tendency of your opinions. I once took the liberty of hinting my suspicions. But I did not think the poison had spread so universally through your frame. And I can only deplore the misfortune, and a very

great one I consider it, to the highest and dearest interests of man among all your readers.*

These must be very numerous. I see you are getting a second edition already. I give you joy of it. And I remain, with an equal mixture of regret and regard,

Your obliged Friend and Servant,

J. WHITAKER.

N° LXXII.

Rev. Dr. JOSEPH WARTON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, Winchester, March 11th, 1776.

I CANNOT forbear expressing my thanks to you, for the very great pleasure and instruction I have met with in your excellent work. I protest to you I know of no history in our language written with equal purity, precision, and elegancy of style. I presume you have heard that offence is taken at some passages that are thought unfavourable to the truth of Christianity. I hope you will proceed to finish your plan, and gratify the eager wishes of the public to see the whole of your work. May I ever hope for the honour of seeing you at this place? It would give me the most real pleasure.

I am, dear Sir,

With the truest regard, your much obliged and very faithful humble Servant,

JOS. WARTON.

* If the letters of Mr. Whitaker had been perused previously to the publication of the former edition, this manly and spirited declaration in favour of the principles of the Established Church, and against the perversion of those opinions which constitute the greatest comfort and consolation of the Christian world, would not have been then withheld from the public. S.

N°

N° LXXIII.

DAVID GARRICK, *Esq. to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, Adelphi, March 9th, 1776.

WHENEVER I am truly pleased I must communicate my joy: Lord Camden called upon me this morning, and, before Cumberland, declared that he never read a more admirable performance than Mr. Gibbon's History, &c. *He was in transport, and so was I—the author is the only man to write history of the age—such depth—such perspicuity —such language, force, variety, and what not!*

I am so delighted with him, continues he, that I must write to thank him—I should be happy to know him. My Lord, I have that honour, and will contrive, if possible, to bring you together. Said I too much? My coach is at the door—my wife bawling for me, and every thing impatient—so hey for Hampton till Monday, and in the mean time, as I am always, most truly,

Your most obedient and obliged,

D. GARRICK.

I have not a moment to read over this scrawl.

N° LXXIV.

The Hon. HORACE WALPOLE *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

MR. WALPOLE cannot express how much he is obliged to Mr. Gibbon for the valuable present he has received; nor how great a comfort it is to him, in his present situation, in which he little expected

pected to receive singular pleasure. Mr. Walpole does not say this at random, nor from mere confidence in the author's abilities, for he has already (all his weakness would permit) read the first chapter, and is in the greatest admiration of the style, manner, method, clearness, and intelligence. Mr. Walpole's impatience to proceed will struggle with his disorder, and give him such spirits, that he flatters himself he shall owe part of his recovery to Mr. Gibbon, whom, as soon as that is a little effected, he shall beg the honour of seeing.

N° LXXV.

The Hon. HORACE WALPOLE *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

February 14th, 1776.

AFTER the singular pleasure of reading you, Sir, the next satisfaction is to declare my admiration. I have read great part of your volume, and cannot decide to which of its various merits I give the preference, though I have no doubt of assigning my partiality to one virtue of the author, which, seldom as I meet with it, always strikes me superiorly. Its quality will naturally prevent your guessing which I mean. It is your amiable modesty. How can you know so much, judge so well, possess your subject and your knowledge, and your power of judicious reflection so thoroughly, and yet command yourself and betray no dictatorial arrogance of decision? How unlike very ancient and very modern authors! You have unexpectedly given

given the world a classic history. The fame it must acquire will tend every day to acquit this panegyric of flattery. The impressions it has made on me are very numerous. The strongest is the thirst of being better acquainted with you—but I reflect that I have been a trifling author, and am in no light profound enough to deserve your intimacy, except by confessing your superiority so frankly, that I assure you honestly, I already feel no envy, though I did for a moment. The best proof I can give you of my sincerity, is to exhort you, warmly and earnestly, to go on with your noble work—the strongest, though a presumptuous mark of my friendship, is to warn you never to let your charming modesty be corrupted, by the acclamations your talents will receive. The native qualities of the man should never be sacrificed to those of the author, however shining. I take this liberty as an older man, which reminds me how little I dare promise myself that I shall see your work completed! But I love posterity enough to contribute, if I can, to give them pleasure through you.

I am too weak to say more, though I could talk for hours on your history. But one feeling I cannot suppress, though it is a sensation of vanity. I think, nay, I am sure I perceive, that your sentiments on government agree with my own. It is the only point on which I suspect myself of any partiality in my admiration. It is a reflection of a far inferior vanity that pleases me in your speaking with so much distinction of that, alas! wonderful period, in which the world saw five good monarchs

monarchs succeed each other. I have often thought of treating that Elysian æra. Happily it has fallen into better hands!

I have been able to rise to-day, for the first time, and flatter myself that if I have no relapse, you will in two or three days more give me leave, Sir, to ask the honour of seeing you. In the mean time, be just; and do not suspect me of flattering you. You will always hear that I say the same of you to every body.

I am, with the greatest regard, Sir,
Your most obedient humble Servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

N° LXXVI.

The Hon. HORACE WALPOLE *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE gone through your Inquisitor's attack, and am far from being clear that it deserves your giving yourself the trouble of an answer, as neither the detail nor the result affects your argument. So far from it, many of his reproofs are levelled at your having quoted a wrong page, he confessing often that what you have cited is in the author referred to, but not precisely in the individual spot. If St. Peter is attended by a corrector of the press, you will certainly never be admitted where he is porter. I send you my copy, because I scribbled my remarks. I do not send them with the impertinent

tinent presumption of suggesting a hint to you, but to prove I did not grudge the trouble of going through such a book, when you desired it; and to shew how little struck me as of any weight.

I have set down nothing on your imputed plagiarisms, for if they are so, no argument that has ever been employed, must be used again, even where the passage necessary is applied to a different purpose. An author is not allowed to be master of his own works, but by Davis's new law, the first person that cites him, would be so. You probably looked into Middleton. Dodwell, &c. had the same reflections on the same circumstances, or conceived them, so as to recollect them, without remembering what suggested them. Is this plagiarism? If it is, Davis and such cavillers might go a short step farther, and insist that an author should peruse every work antecedently written, on every subject at all collateral to his own,—not to assist him, but to be sure to avoid every material touched by his predecessors.

I will make but one remark on such divine champions. Davis and his prototypes tell you Middleton, &c. have used the same objections, and they have been *confuted; answering*, in the Theologic Dictionary, signifying *confuting*, no matter whether there is sense, argument, truth, in the answer or not.

Upon the whole, I think ridicule is the only answer such a work is intitled to. The ablest answer which you can make (which would be the ablest answer

answer that could be made) would never have any authority with the cabal, yet would allow a sort of dignity to the author. His patrons will always maintain that he vanquished you, unless you make him too ridiculous for them to dare to revive his name. You might divert yourself too with alma mater, the church, employing a goujat to defend the citadel, while the generals repose in their tents. If Irenæus, St. Augustine, &c. did not set apprentices and proselytes to combat Celsus and the adversaries of the new religion——but early bishops had not five or six thousand pounds a-year.

In short, dear Sir, I wish you not to lose your time; that is, either not reply, or set *your mark* on your answer, that it may always be read with the rest of your works.

N° LXXVII.

The Hon. HORACE WALPOLE *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

THE penetration, solidity, and taste, that made you the first of historians, dear Sir, prevent my being surprised at your being the best writer of controversial pamphlets too. I have read you with more precipitation than such a work deserved, but I could not disobey you and detain it. Yet even in that hurry I could discern, besides a thousand beauties and strokes of wit, the inimitable eighty-third page, and the conscious dignity that you maintain throughout, over your monkish antagonists. When

you

accuracy of my brother penmen,) and I find he refers to no passage but what he has seen with his own eyes. I hope the book will be as successful as it deserves to be. I have not yet read the two last chapters, but am sorry, from what I have heard of them, that he has taken such a tone in them as will give great offence, and hurt the sale of the book.

N° LXXIX.

ADAM FERGUSON, *Esq. to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, Edinburgh, March 19th, 1776.

I RECEIVED, about eight days ago, after I had been reading your History, the copy which you have been so good as to send me, and for which I now trouble you with my thanks. But even if I had not been thus called upon to offer you my respects, I could not have refrained from congratulating you on the merit, and undoubted success, of this valuable performance. The persons of this place whose judgment you will value most, agree in opinion, that you have made a great addition to the classical literature of England, and given us, what Thucydides proposed leaving with his own countrymen, a *possession in perpetuity*. Men of a certain modesty and merit always exceed the expectations of their friends; and it is with very great pleasure I tell you, that although you must have observed in me every mark of consideration and regard, that this is, nevertheless, the case, I receive

receive your instruction, and study your model, with great deference, and join with every one else, in applauding the extent of your plan, in hands so well able to execute it. Some of your readers, I find, were impatient to get at the fifteenth chapter, and began at that place. I have not heard much of their criticism, but am told that many doubt of your orthodoxy. I wish to be always of the charitable side, while I own you have proved that the clearest stream may become foul when it comes to run over the muddy bottom of human nature. I have not stayed to make any particular remarks. If any should occur on the second reading, I shall not fail to lay in my claim to a more needed, and more useful admonition from you, in case I ever produce any thing that merits your attention.

And am, with the greatest respect, dear Sir,

Your most obliged, and most humble Servant,

ADAM FERGUSON.

N° LXXX.

Extract of a Letter from Mr. DAVID HUME *to Mr.* STRAHAN, *dated*

Edinburgh, April 8th, 1776.

* * * * I AM very much taken with Mr. Gibbon's Roman History, which came from your press, and am glad to hear of its success. There will no books of reputation now be printed in London but through your hands and Mr. Cadell's. The Author tells me, that he is already preparing a second edition. I resolved to have given him my advice with regard to the manner of

printing it; but as I am now writing to you, it is the same thing. He ought certainly to print the number of the chapter at the head of the margin; and it would be better if something of the contents could also be added. One is also plagued with his notes, according to the present method of printing the book: when a note is announced, you turn to the end of the volume; and there you often find nothing but a reference to an authority. All these authorities ought only to be printed at the margin; or the bottom of the page. I desire a copy of my new edition should be sent to Mr. Gibbon; as wishing that gentleman, whom I so highly value, should peruse me in a form the least imperfect to which I can bring my work.

* * * * Dr. Smith's performance is another excellent work that has come from your press this winter; but I have ventured to tell him, that it requires too much thought to be as popular as Mr. Gibbon's.

N° LXXXI.

Mr. FERGUSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, Edinburgh, April 18th, 1776.

I SHOULD make some apology for not writing you sooner an answer to your obliging letter; but if you should honour me frequently with such requests, you will find, that, with very good intentions, I am a very dilatory and irregular correspondent. I am sorry to tell you, that our respectable friend * is still declining in his health; he is greatly

* Mr. Hume.

emaciated,

emaciated, and loses strength. He talks familiarly of his near prospect of dying. His mother, it seems, died under the same symptoms; and it appears so little necessary, or proper, to flatter him, that no one attempts it. I never observed his understanding more clear, or his humour more pleasant and lively. He has a great aversion to leave the tranquillity of his own house, to go in search of health among inns and hostlers. And his friends here gave way to him for some time; but now think it necessary that he should make an effort to try what change of place and air, or any thing else Sir John Pringle may advise, can do for him. I left him this morning in the mind to comply in this article, and I hope that he will be prevailed on to set out in a few days. He is just now sixty-five.

I am very glad that the pleasure you give us recoils a little on yourself, through our feeble testimony. I have, as you suppose, been employed, at any intervals of leisure or rest I have had for some years, in taking notes, or collecting materials, for a History of the distractions that broke down the Roman Republic, and ended in the establishment of Augustus and his immediate successors. The compliment you are pleased to pay, I cannot accept of, even to my subject. Your subject now appears with advantages it was not supposed to have had; and I suspect that the magnificence of the mouldering ruin will appear more striking, than the same building when the view is perplexed with scaffolding, workmen, and disorderly lodgers, and

the ear is stunned with the noise of destructions and repairs, and the alarms of fire. The night which you begin to describe is solemn, and there are gleams of light superior to what is to be found in any other time. I comfort myself, that as my trade is the study of human nature, I could not fix on a more interesting corner of it, than the end of the Roman Republic. Whether my compilations should ever deserve the attention of any one besides myself, must remain to be determined after they are farther advanced. I take the liberty to trouble you with the inclosed for Mr. Smith, whose uncertain stay in London makes me at a loss how to direct for him. You have both such reason to be pleased with the world just now, that I hope you are pleased with each other.

I am, with the greatest respect,
Dear Sir,
Your most obedient, and most humble Servant,
ADAM FERGUSON.

N° LXXXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

London, May 20th, 1776.

I AM angry that you should impede my noble designs of visiting foreign parts, more especially as I have an advantage which Sir Wilful had not, that of understanding your foreign lingos. With regard to Mrs. Gibbon, her intended visit, to which I was not totally a stranger, will do me honour; and, though it should delay my emigration till the end

end of July, there will still remain the months of August, September, and October. Above all, abstain from giving the least hint to any Bath correspondent, and perhaps, if I am not provoked by opposition, the thing may not be absolutely certain. At all events, you may depend on a previous visit. At present, I am very busy with the Neckers. I live with her, just as I used to do twenty years ago, laugh at her Paris varnish, and oblige her to become a simple reasonable Suissesse. The man who might read English husbands lessons of proper and dutiful behaviour, is a sensible good-natured creature. In about a fortnight I launch again into the world in the shape of a quarto volume. Cadell assures me, that he never remembered so eager and impatient a demand for a second edition. The town is beginning to break up; the day after to-morrow we have our last day in the House of Commons, to inquire into the instructions of the commissioners. I like the plan, and the motion appears plain. Adieu. I dined with Lord Palmerstone to-day; great dinner of catches. I embrace my Lady and the Maria.

N° LXXXIII.

The Same to the Same.

To tell you any thing of the change, or rather changes, of governors, I must have known something of them myself; but all is darkness, confusion, and uncertainty, to such a degree, that people do not even know what lies to invent. The news

from America have indeed diverted the public attention into another, and far greater, channel. All that you see in the papers, of the repulse at Quebec, as well as the capture of Lee, rests on the authority (a very unexceptionable one) of the provincial papers, as they have been transmitted by Governor Tryon from New York. Howe is well, and eats plentifully; and the weather seems to clear up so fast, that, according to the English custom, we have passed from the lowest despondency to a full assurance of success. My new birth happened last Monday; seven hundred of the fifteen hundred were gone yesterday. I now understand, from pretty good authority, that Dr. Porteus, the friend and chaplain of Secker, is actually sharpening his goose quill against the two last chapters. Adieu.

June the 6th, 1776, from Almack's, where I was chosen last week.

N° LXXXIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Almack's, June 24th, 1776.

YES, yes, I am alive, and well; but what shall I say? Town grows empty, and this house, where I have passed very agreeable hours, is the only place which still unites the flower of the English youth. The style of living, though *somewhat* expensive, is exceedingly pleasant, and, notwithstanding the rage of play, I have found more entertaining, and even rational society here, than in any other club to

to which I belong. Mrs. Gibbon still hangs in suspense, and seems to consider a town-expedition with horror. I think, however, that she will be soon in motion; and when I have her in Bentinck-street, we shall perhaps talk of a Sheffield excursion. I am now deeply engaged in the reign of Constantine, and, from the specimens which I have already seen, I can venture to promise, that the second volume will not be less interesting than the first. The fifteen hundred copies are moving off with decent speed, and the obliging Cadell begins to mutter something of a third edition for next year.* No news of Deyverdun, or

* *State of the Account of Mr. Gibbon's Roman Empire, Third Edition. 1st Vol. No.* 1000.

1777.

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his French translation. What a lazy dog! Madame Necker has been gone a great while. I gave her, *en partant*, the most solemn assurances of following her *paws* in less than two months; but the voice of indolence begins to whisper a thousand difficulties, and unless your absurd policy should thoroughly provoke me, the Parisian journey may possibly be deferred. I rejoice in the progress of * * * * towards light. We are in expectation of American news. Carleton is made a Knight of the Bath. The old report of Washington's resignation, and quarrel with the Congress, seems to revive. Adieu.

N° LXXXV.

Extract of a Letter from Dr. GEORGE CAMPBELL, *Professor at* Aberdeen, *to Mr.* STRAHAN, *dated* Aberdeen, June 25th, 1776.

I HAVE lately read over one of your last winter's publications with very great pleasure, and I hope some instruction. My expectations were indeed high when I began it; but, I assure you, the entertainment I received greatly exceeded them. What made me fall to it with greater avidity was, that it had in part a pretty close connection with a subject I had occasion to treat sometimes in my Theological Lectures; to wit, the Rise and Progress of the Hierarchy: and you will believe that I was not the less pleased to discover,

cover, in an historian of so much learning and penetration, so great a coincidence with my own sentiments, in relation to some obscure points in the Christian antiquities. I suppose I need not now inform you, that the book I mean is Gibbon's History of the Fall of the Roman Empire; which, in respect of the style and manner, as well as the matter, is a most masterly performance.

N° LXXXVI.

Madame NECKER *à Monsieur* GIBBON.

Paris, 29 Juillet.

JE me reprocherois vivement, Monsieur, d'avoir laissé si long temps sans réponse la plus touchante et la plus aimable des lettres, si je l'avois fait par paresse ou par négligence; mais j'ai malheureusement une trop bonne excuse, M. Necker a été long temps malade non du regret d'avoir donné sa démission, mais du chagrin d'avoir été obligé de la donner; car il est pour les honnêtes gens une nécessité morale plus invincible que la necessité physique: les inquiétudes, que la santé de Mons. Necker m'a fait éprouver, m'ont appris plus que jamais à compter pour rien les peines qui n'affectent pas la sensibilité; quand Monsieur Necker se chargea d'une grande place, je crus le prêter à l'honneur, et non aux honneurs, et quand on a voulu lui conserver les uns au dépens de l'autre, j'ai repris avec transport le bien dont je m'étois privée,

privée, et j'ai l'ame trop tendre pour craindre de ne pouvoir pas seule suffire au bonheur d'une personne qui m'est chère: la retraite de Monsieur Necker a été accompagné des regrets et de l'étonnement de toute la France, et nous même en descendant au fond de nos cœurs nous ne pouvons encore comprendre qu'on nous ait contraint à abandonner une administration, où le succès avoit toujours suivi la pureté des intentions: nous sommes à St. Ouen; mais loin d'y éprouver le sort ordinaire, et auquel la morale commune m'avoit preparé, nous avons été suivis non seulement des gens, que nous croyons attachés à nous par les seules circonstances, mais encore d'une foule inombrable de citoyens de tous les ordres, qui ne tiennent aux grandes places, que par la relation du bien public. M. Necker a été baigné de larmes et comblé d'éloges et de bénédictions, et tout ce qui s'est fait à cette occasion pourroit être raconté par un historien, mais ne peut être hasardé dans une lettre: mon estime pour la voix publique en est augmentée: il semble que la vérité jaillit du milieu de cette agitation de toutes les ames, et que le mensonge, qui se réfugie quelquefois dans les opinions particulières, en est bientôt chassé par cette voix générale, comme les démons l'étoient jadis par le nom de la divinité: pardon si je vous parle de Monsieur Necker avec cette franchise. Vous sçavez par l'histoire de tous les siècles, et peut-être par la vôtre, que les petits défauts non seulement ne concluent rien contre le génie, mais même

même l'annoncent souvent; ces défauts des grands hommes sont un présent, que la nature bienfaisante fait à leurs femmes, ou à leurs amis: un homme parfait se suffiroit à lui-même: il faut avoir des torts et des foiblesses pour sentir les jouissances, les besoins, et les consolations, que le cœur peut donner. C'est à cette circonstance, que je dois l'article du Compte Rendu, dont vous me parlez avec tant de graces. Je ne sçaurois m'empêcher d'être sensible à ce que vous m'en dites, et cependant je puis vous assurer qu'il a paru malgré moi; j'ai joui long tems en silence du plaisir de rendre Monsieur Necker heureux, et l'opinion ne pouvoit rien ajouter à ce sentiment; car il est une conscience pour le cœur comme pour la vertu, à qui les regards des hommes sont indifférents, mais ceux de l'affection ne peuvent l'être: ils ajoutent à tous les biens; et d'ailleurs votre amitié m'est trop chère pour ne pas désirer votre estime.

Nous n'avons pas encore eu le temps d'éprouver le vuide que laisse l'absence des grandes affaires: nous n'avons senti que la crainte qu'elles ne prisent une route différente de celle que nous leur avions tracée: car la passion du bien public comme toutes les passions abstraites, doit être constante, puisque l'objet en est inaltérable.

Votre tendresse paternelle me paroît si bien placée, que je ne puis m'empêcher de la partager; vos enfans ont quelques défauts dans le caractère, mais ils nous enchantent, et vous m'avez appris à aimer l'histoire, qui m'avoit toujours paru jusques à pré-

à présent un miroir exagéré de nos deformités, parceque les grands traits parvenoient seuls jusques à nous: à présent je la lis avec délices, cette histoire, où je crois voir à la fois l'esprit de tant de siècles concentré dans une seule tête, et les jugemens de toutes les nations aboutis à un seul jugement, qui les éclaire, et qui nous les rend avec toutes les graces de la nouveauté sans leur rien faire perdre, cependant, de leur air noble et antique. Vous ne devez pas douter du plaisir que vos succès m'ont fait goûter; car depuis long temps, je ne suis avertie de mon amour-propre que par ma sensibilité: je ne vous donnerai pas de conseils: je ne pourrois critiquer que vos opinions ou vos sentimens, et ce n'est pas de conseils qui peuvent les changer: vous avez d'ailleurs une manière d'écrire qui n'appartient qu'à vous: il faut que vous suiviez l'impulsion de votre génie, et quiconque hasarderoit d'autres avis que celui de vous livrer hardiment à vous même, ne seroit pas digne de vous admirer n'y de sentir le prix inestimable d'une sublime singularité.

Nous formons le projet de passer l'été prochaine en Suisse, mais je n'ose encore m'en flatter, car Monsieur Necker est très indécis dans les petites choses: où que j'aille, vos livres me suivront et me feront goûter à la fois le plaisir et le bonheur par le double intérêt de l'auteur et de l'ouvrage: si vous y joignez quelques lettres, elles seront bien accueillies et bien senties: si vous n'écrivez point ... mais je ne veux pas m'arrêter sur le douloureux soupçon;

soupçon; je finis ces longs discours que la seule amitié peut pardonner: j'ai cru que vous me permettriez de dicter cette lettre: les sentimens divers auxquels j'ai été en proye, ont diminué mes forces; mais si mes doigts ne sçauroient tenir la plume sans fatigue, mon cœur et ma pensée peuvent, en revanche, s'élancer au delà des mers, et ne se lassent jamais de le faire.

C. N.

Mon addresse est actuellement à Paris, Rue Bergère.

N° LXXXVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Saturday, August, 1776.

WE expect you at five o'clock Tuesday, without a sore throat. You have ere this heard of the shocking accident which takes up the attention of the town. Our old acquaintance * * * * * * * *. By his own indolence, rather than extravagance, his circumstances were embarrassed, and he had frequently declared himself tired of life. No public news, nor any material expected, till the end of this, or the beginning of next month, when Howe will probably have collected his whole force. A tough business indeed. You see by their declaration, that they have now passed the Rubicon, and rendered the work of a treaty infinitely more difficult. You will perhaps say, so much the better; but

but I do assure you, that the *thinking* friends of Government are by no means sanguine. I take the opportunity of eating turtle with Garrick at Hampton. Adieu.

N° LXXXVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Saturday, three-quarters past Eleven, 1776.

FOR the present I am so deeply engaged, that you must renounce the hasty apparition at Sheffield-place; but if you should be very impatient, I will try (after the meeting) to run down, between the Friday and Monday, and bring you the last editions of things. At present *nought* but expectation. The attack on me is begun; an anonymous eighteen-penny pamphlet, which will get the author more glory in the next world than in this. The heavy troops, Watson and another, are on their march. Adieu.

N° LXXXIX.

Extract of a Letter from Mr. WALLACE *to Mr.* STRAHAN, *dated* Edinburgh, August 30th, 1776.

ALAS for David Hume!* His friends have sustained a great loss in his death. He was interred yesterday, at a place he lately purchased in the burying-ground on the Calton.

* Mr. Hume died at Edinburgh, August 25th, 1776.

" For

" For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?"

A monument on that airy elevated cemetery, which, on account of a magnificent terrace now carried round the hill, is greatly frequented, will be extremely conspicuous, and must often call his name to remembrance. It has been remarked, that the same day on which Lucretius died, gave birth to Virgil; and amidst their late severe loss, philosophy and literature will probably find themselves not wholly disconsolate, on reflecting that the same year in which they were deprived of Hume, Gibbon arose; his superior in some respects. This gentleman's History of the Decline of the Roman Empire appears to me, in point of composition, incomparably the finest production in English, without any exception. I hardly thought the language capable of arriving at his correctness, perspicuity, and strength.

N° XC.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

1776.

I HOPE you bark and growl at my silence; growl and bark. This is not a time for correspondence. Parliament, visits, dinners, suppers, and an hour or two stolen with difficulty for the Decline, leave but very little leisure. I send you the Gazette, and have scarcely any thing to add, except that about five hundred of them have deserted to us, and

and that the New York incendiaries were immediately, and very justifiably, destined to the cord. Lord George Germaine, with whom I had a long conversation last night, was in high spirits, and hopes to reconquer Germany in America. On the side of Canada, he only fears Carleton's *slowness*, but entertains great expectations that the light troops and Indians, under Sir William Johnson, who are sent from Oswego down the Mohawk River to Albany, will oblige the Provincials to give up the defence of the Lakes, for fear of being cut off. The report of a foreign war subsides. House of Commons dull, and opposition talk of suspending hostilities from despair.

An anonymous pamphlet and Dr. Watson out against me; (in my opinion,) the former feeble, and very illiberal; the latter uncommonly genteel. At last I have had a letter from Deyverdun; wretched excuses; nothing done; vexatious enough. To-morrow I write to Suard, a very skilful translator of Paris, who was here in the spring with the Neckers, to get him (if not too late) to undertake it. Adieu.

N° XCI.

MADAME NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

30 Septembre, 1776.

A MON retour de Londres, Monsieur, toutes les marques d'amitié que vous m'avez données m'ont été sans cesse présentes; mais je voulois vous lire, et j'espérois de vous voir; vous ne venez point, je vais

vais donc exprimer bien foiblement l'impression que j'ai ressentie. Vous avez répandu sur une immense érudition la plus profonde et la plus fine connoissance des hommes et de l'humanité, des nations et des individus de tous les rangs; vous avez réuni le philosophe et l'homme sensible; et cette histoire ignorée pendant plusieurs siècles deviendra, je n'en doute point, la plus connue et la plus citée. Carinus vous devra la célébrité de Néron, et Decie ou Gordien celle du vertueux Titus. Vous avez montré que les hommes extraordinaires ont existé dans tous les tems, et que la nature, qui n'avoit d'abord refusé qu'un Tacite à Aurélien ou Zénobie, n'a pu se résoudre à laisser son ouvrage imparfait; si vous avez moins de précision que cet historien, en revanche vous avez cent fois plus d'idées, et de variétés dans les idées. On voit qu'il a été le modèle et peut-être la source de votre ouvrage, mais c'est une source qui s'est grossie de tous les torrents de pensées qui ont coulé dans tous les siècles, et vous avez montré ce qu'une imagination féconde et sensible peut encore ajouter à la profondeur et à l'étendue de l'esprit. Les seuls philosophes lisent Tacite, vous serez lu de tout le monde; nous apprendrons à penser en croyant ne nous exercer qu'à voir et à sentir, et malgré vous, Monsieur, dans le nombre de vos lecteurs, vous compterez autant de femmes que d'hommes; j'ai dit malgré vous, car vous les avez maltraitées; à vous entendre toutes leurs vertus sont factices; étoit-ce vous, Monsieur, qui deviez en parler ainsi?

Vous désirez et vous méritez la plus

célébrité, l'élan de votre ouvrage le prouve: mais l'aigle ne dédaigne pas de prendre un point d'appui sur la terre pour s'élever dans les airs; ce point d'appui ce n'est pas à Londres qu'il faut le chercher; vous êtes trop occupés de vos affaires; les femmes n'y parlent point, et dans tous les pays où elles ne sont pas le centre de la conversation la renommée n'a qu'une voix et qu'une oreille. C'est à Paris qu'il est agréable d'être un grand homme, car c'est là seulement qu'on cherche à plaire par la vivacité de la conversation et qu'on fait passer ses sentimens dans l'ame des autres par l'art perfectionné de l'exagération. Si nous n'avions fait usage de cet art rendriez vous justice même à Voltaire? et depuis que nous apprenons l'anglois nous avons augmenté jusques chez vous la célébrité de vos propres auteurs, et cet éclat de Shakespear à qui le doit-il? à la puissance d'un acteur sublime qui s'emparoit tous les jours pendant trois heures du cœur et des oreilles des Anglois, et qui faisoit sur eux l'effet de la conversation chez nous. Je sçais que votre ouvrage a fait un bruit prodigieux, et cependant je ne vous donne pas encore trois ans de guerre en Amérique pour que ce bruit ne se fasse plus entendre que dans le lointain. Votre politique, cette montagne qui écrase tout, étouffe même les géants et ne laisse paroître de tems en tems que ceux qui, comme vous, soulèvent ce poids immense par des torrents de flammes: livrez nous donc votre ouvrage, mais point de germanismes. Monsieur Deyverdun a beaucoup d'esprit et vous verrez malgré cela qu'il fera plusieurs plis aux feuilles de rose. Vous qui avez

transporté

transporté dans l'anglois toute la delicatesse, toute la finesse, et en même tems toute la clarté de notre langue, vous transporterez dans le françois la richesse et l'énergie de la vôtre, et vous les écrirez toutes deux avec cette plume harmonieuse qui semble ne placer un mot que pour flatter l'oreille comme une main habile choisit les touches d'un clavecin.

Au reste j'ose refuser toujours mon enthousiasme à vos trois derniers chapitres. Pourquoi l'homme de génie qui fait son dieu de la gloire et qui croit vivre éternellement dans son sein, veut-il ôter la même espérance à ceux qui mettent leur vertu à la place de cette gloire?

Je me rappelle la franchise de nos entretiens de Londres, et je crois vous devoir un mot sur vos compatriotes, toujours sous le scéau du secret. J'ai vu plus souvent Milord et Milady Lucan que Madame de Montagu, d'abord par le désir que j'avois de vous plaire, à présent l'attrait qu'ont toujours les bonnes gens sans prétentions et d'une société facile et douce. D'ailleurs les propos à bâtons rompus ne font pas mal dans un pays où la conversation est un esclavage dès qu'elle n'est pas un plaisir. Il semble ici que les longues phrases et les longues pensées vous jettent au col un nœud coulant pour vous empêcher de vous enfuir. Madame Montagu est venue à Paris comme à la suite de Shakespear, dans un moment où Voltaire et ses partisans accablent cet auteur de mauvaises plaisanteries, et vous sentez qu'il en tombe quelques unes à droite et à gauche sur son adoratrice. Malgré cela tout le monde rend justice à l'esprit, aux lumières, et

à l'honnêteté de Madame de Montagu. Elle fait des éfforts inouis pour s'exprimer en françois: en l'écoutant, je me rappelle les tourmens que j'éprouvois en Angleterre où je n'entendois personne et où personne ne m'entendoit. Qui ne sçait compâtir aux maux qu'on a soufferts?

Cependant je ris et ne compâtis point. Mais quand viendrez vous donc, Monsieur? fixez nous l'époque précise afin que nous soyons heureux d'avance. Nous vous présentons, Monsieur Necker et moi, l'assurance des sentimens distingués que nous vous avons voués pour la vie.

Pardon, Monsieur; une légère incommodité ne m'a pas permis d'écrire de ma main cette énorme lettre.

N° XCII.

Mr. GIBBON *to the Reverend Dr.* WATSON (*now Bishop of* Landaff.)

Bentinck-street, November 2d, 1776.

MR. GIBBON takes the earliest opportunity of presenting his compliments and thanks to Dr. Watson, and of expressing his sense of the liberal treatment which he has received from so candid an adversary. Mr. Gibbon entirely coincides in opinion with Dr. Watson, that as their different sentiments, on a very important period of history, are now submitted to the Public, they both may employ their time in a manner much more useful, as well as agreeable, than they could possibly do by exhibiting a single combat in the amphitheatre of controversy. Mr. Gibbon is therefore determined to resist the temptation of justifying, in a professed

professed reply, any passages of his History, which might perhaps be easily cleared from censure and misapprehension; but he still reserves to himself the privilege of inserting in a future edition some occasional remarks and explanations of his meaning. If any calls of pleasure or business should bring Dr. Watson to town, Mr. Gibbon would think himself happy in being permitted to solicit the honour of his acquaintance.

N° XCIII.

Dr. WATSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

Cambridge, November 4th, 1776.

DR. WATSON accepts with pleasure Mr. Gibbon's polite invitation to a personal acquaintance. If he comes to town this winter, will certainly do himself the honour to wait upon him. Begs, at the same time, to assure Mr. Gibbon, that he will be very happy to have an opportunity of shewing him every civility, if curiosity, or other motives, should bring him to Cambridge. Dr. Watson can have some faint idea of Mr. Gibbon's difficulty in resisting the temptation he speaks of, from having been of late in a situation somewhat similar himself. It would be very extraordinary, if Mr. Gibbon did not feel a parent's partiality for an offspring which has justly excited the admiration of all who have seen it; and Dr. Watson would be the last person in the world to wish him to suppress any explanation which might tend to exalt its merits.

N° XCIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Almack's, November 7th, 1776.

LETTERS from Burgoyne. They embarked on the Lakes the 30th September, with eight hundred British sailors, six thousand regulars, and a naval force superior to any possible opposition: but the season was so far advanced, that they expected only to occupy and strengthen Ticonderoga, and afterwards to return and take up their winter quarters in Canada. Yesterday we had a surprize in the House, from a proclamation of the Howes, which made its first appearance in the Morning Post, and which nobody seems to understand. By this time, my Lady may see that I have not much reason to fear my antagonists. Adieu, till next Thursday.

N° XCV.

The Same to the Same.

Friday Evening, November 22d.

NEWS from the Lakes. A naval combat, in which the Provincials were repulsed with considerable loss. They burnt and abandoned Crown Point. Carleton is besieging Ticonderoga. Carleton, I say; for he is there, and it is apprehended that Burgoyne is coming home. We dismissed the Nabobs without a division. Burke and the Attorney General spoke very well. Adieu.

N°

N° XCVI.

M. SUARD *à M.* GIBBON.

MONSIEUR, Paris, le 25 Novembre, 1776.

JE ne connois qu'un homme digne de faire passer dans notre langue votre excellente histoire de la Décadence de l'Empire Romain, et cet homme c'est vous. Puisque vous attachez quelque prix à l'opinion du public François, je suis étonné que vous n'ayez pas voulu prendre cette peine. Vous écrivez notre langue non seulement avec une correction et une pureté rare, mais encore avec une élégance et un choix de tours et d'expressions que peu de nos gens de lettres possèdent. Je vous ai rendu cet hommage avant que d'avoir l'honneur de vous connoître personnellement. Vous savez, Monsieur, combien j'ai goûté votre Essai sur la Littérature,—ouvrage où je trouvois réuni ce qui se rencontre rarement ensemble, l'esprit, le goût, et l'érudition. J'ai lu votre nouvel ouvrage, et j'y ai trouvé ces mêmes qualités avec le degré de maturité, avec les vues et la philosophie que l'étude et le tems ont dû ajouter à un talent supérieur.

J'aime peu l'histoire, parceque je n'ai jamais pu retenir ni dates ni faits ; mais je passerois ma vie à l'étudier si elle étoit écrite comme le morceau que vous nous en avez donné. C'est un tableau complet et parfait. Vous y avez embrassé l'histoire des mœurs et des faits et celle de tout l'univers connu. Vous avez porté la lumière dans le cahos, et vous avez suivi le fil caché des évènemens les plus bizarres dans ce labyrinthe obscur où tous les liens qui unissent les hommes en société et toutes

les règles qui les dirigent étant rompues, les plus grandes révolutions paroissent ne tenir qu'au caprice d'une multitude ivre, aux passions extravagantes de quelques individus, ou à des combinaisons fortuites de circonstances. Vos chapitres préliminaires sur l'état de l'Empire, sont des chefs-d'œuvre ; les folies atroces de Commode ; la couronne à l'enchère après la mort de Pertinax ; la grande révolution opérée par Constantin, sont des morceaux achevés. Les deux derniers chapitres, dont je te vis très scandalisé aussi si j'étois Docteur de Sorbonne ou Pape, m'expliquent parfaitement ce que je n'ai encore trouvé nulle part, l'ensemble des causes qui ont favorisé l'établissement et les progrès de notre vraiment merveilleuse religion. Tout cela est relevé par un stile toujours animé, toujours varié, noble et piquant. Voilà, Monsieur, sans aucune exagération ce que je pense de votre ouvrage. Jugez si j'aurois eu du plaisir à répondre à la confiance que vous me témoignez, et à essayer de le traduire. Il y a long tems que je me suis engagé à traduire l'histoire de l'Amérique que Monsieur Robertson fait imprimer actuellement, et dont on me remet les feuilles. Je me suis promis que ce seroit la dernière tâche de ce genre que je m'imposerois : si j'étois tenté de manquer à mon vœu ce seroit certainement pour vous, mais il n'y faut pas penser. Je sais avec certitude que la traduction de la première partie de votre ouvrage est actuellement sous presse à Paris, et qu'elle est faite par M. de Septchênes, jeune homme qui a vécu assez long tems en Angleterre et qui étoit fort lié avec Monsieur Garnier. Je ne connois

connois point ses talens ; c'est le premier ouvrage qu'il compose ; mais je sais qu'il est fort studieux, fort zélé, et estimé de gens de beaucoup de mérite. Si vous désirez de plus grands éclaircissemens, faites moi l'honneur de me le mander. Au reste, quelque médiocre que soit la traduction, je réponds du succès; mais il seroit complet si elle étoit écrite du stile de la lettre que vous m'avez adressée. Je l'ai communiquée à Madame Necker, qui a été fort étonnée que vous n'en ayez pas reçu une qu'elle vous a écrite, il y a trois à quatre mois.

Vous ne doutez pas du plaisir que vos amis ont éprouvé en voyant Monsieur Necker à portée d'exercer pour le bien de ce pays-ci les talens et les vertus que nous lui connoissons. Je fais bien des vœux avec vous pour que ses efforts ne soient point contrariés par un horrible fléau qui nous menace, et qu'il redoute autant que nous. Il n'y a certainement que l'habitude d'entendre parler de guerre et d'en voir qui puisse déterminer les princes à les entreprendre, et les peuples à y consentir; car il n'y a jamais eu de fureur plus insensée.

On m'a dit qu'on alloit publier à Londres une petite vie de Monsieur Hume écrite par lui-même. Pourrois-je attendre de votre bonté, Monsieur, que vous voudrez bien vous le procurer pour moi dès qu'elle paroîtra, et l'adresser, sans aucun avis ni seconde enveloppe, *à Monsieur De Vaines, Premier Commis des Finances, à Paris.* Si je pouvois vous être de quelque utilité ici, disposez de moi avec

avec liberté et comptez, je vous prie, sur les sentimens très distingués avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant Serviteur,

SUARD.

N° XCVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. à Madame* NECKER.

A Londres, ce 26 Novembre, 1776.

QUE vous avez bien raison, Madame, de célébrer l'art perfectionné de l'exagération! Vous le faites briller dans chaque ligne de cette lettre charmante que j'ai relue cent fois avec la plus vive satisfaction. Par le magique de cet art séducteur vous avez su placer un écrivain inconnu à côté de Tacite et des plus grands hommes. J'embrasse avec ardeur l'illusion flatteuse que vous avez substituée à la triste vérité, et je me persuade sans peine que tous vos arrêts seront confirmés par le public, et par la posterité. Ne croyez cependant pas que par une affectation orgueilleuse et déplacée je veuille rejetter tous ces lauriers dont vous m'avez couronnés. Je sais que le séjour de Paris, en faisant éclater sur un plus grand théâtre votre goût et vos talens, n'a pas étouffé votre franchise Helvétique. Le fonds de ce que vous dites de plus obligeant vous le pensez véritablement; et quand votre partialité pour l'auteur vous auroit trompé sur le prix de son ouvrage, je ne perdrois rien au change. Votre amitié vaut bien la réputation la mieux méritée.

Vous

Vous me refusez cependant les qualités d'un preux chevalier toujours prêt à rompre une lance pour l'honneur de Dieu et des dames. Je pourrois me justifier par l'austère devoir qui ne permet pas à un historien de dissimuler les défauts des objets les plus sacrés ou les plus chéris. Mais étoit-ce à moi de maltraiter les femmes et de représenter toutes leurs vertus comme factices? Il me semble que ce n'est que sur leur courage que j'ai osé jetter ce soupçon. Votre sexe est destiné à consoler le genre humain, à lui plaire toujours, quelquefois à l'instruire, jamais à le faire trembler. Vous connoissez d'ailleurs le pays où je vis: quand on veut peindre les siècles les plus reculés on les dessine, sans s'en appercevoir, d'après les modèles qu'on a devant les yeux. Nos Angloises ne savent étaler que leurs désordres et leurs ridicules; les graces, les talens, les vertus même sont ensèvelies sous des glaces éternelles. Daignez vous rappeller que depuis douze ans je n'ai passé que six semaines dans la société de Madame Necker. En réitérant une invitation dont je sens tout le prix, vous augmentez mon regret de ne pouvoir pas en profiter sitôt que je le voudrois. Mon voyage étoit decidé: cependant l'année va s'écouler sans que j'aie pu exécuter ce dessein, et je me trouve dans la nécessité de renvoyer mes espérances à l'été prochain. Vous ne désapprouverez pas les motifs de mon délai. Je sacrifie le plaisir au devoir. Un ami intime m'avoit nommé son exécuteur testamentaire. Il a laissé des affaires à débrouiller, un procès très important à suivre dans les tribunaux, et des fonctions

tions essentielles à remplir qui ne seroient que trop negligées si je m'éloignois de Londres. Mon cœur anticipe avec la plus vive impatience le moment où je pourrois me dégager de mes liens, me rendre auprès de vous et vous contempler dans la situation élevée et brillante où vous êtes placée. Autrefois j'ai étudié votre ame dans l'humble simplicité de la vie la plus domestique. Vous avez soutenue l'adversité. La modération de votre caractère n'a point été corrompue par le luxe et les applaudissemens de Paris. La fortune vous prépare une autre épreuve; et par la justice qu'elle vient de rendre au mérite de Monsieur Necker, elle vous fournit une nouvelle occasion de l'apprécier et de la mépriser. J'espère que votre ami trouvera les moyens de concilier l'intérêt général de l'humanité avec les intérêts exclusifs de la monarchie dont il administre les finances. C'est peut-être le problême le plus difficile de la politique, mais dont la difficulté ne se fait sentir aux hommes d'états qui sont en même tems des philosophes vertueux. Si je n'avois pas craint de le détourner de ses occupations importantes, je l'aurois remercié de ses bontés. J'ignore cependant si c'est une lettre de félicitation ou de condoléance qu'on doit addresser à un nouveau ministre. Je sais seulement qu'on s'empresse toujours à leur demander des grâces; et pour me conformer à l'usage j'aurois presque envie de le solliciter en faveur du pauvre le Texier qui m'en a conjuré les larmes aux yeux. Mais on peut se reposer sur M. Necker et sur vous même du soin d'encourager les talens et de relever les malheureux.

Vous

Vous êtes d'ailleurs bien plus à portée de connoître les véritables détails de sa conduite à Lyons, et de juger jusqu'à quel point l'honnêteté et la prudence vous permettent de vous intéresser pour lui. Je me contenterai donc de vous assurer que malgré l'acharnement de ses ennemis les procédés de le Texier depuis son arrivée en Angleterre lui ont acquis l'estime et l'amitié des personnes les plus respectables; qu'il fait paroître des sentimens et même de la sagesse, et qu'il s'est appliqué avec succès à l'étude de l'anglois, au travail et à la traduction. Sa situation devient tous les jours plus triste, et s'il n'a commis que des indiscrétions il me semble qu'il en a été puni suffisament. A propos de traduction, la paresse de mon ami Deyverdun nous a sauvé, à mon grand regret, de ses germanismes. Il a renoncé à l'entreprise, et un mot de votre part pourroit déterminer M. Suard à se prêter à mes vues que j'ai déjà pris la liberté de lui proposer. Malgré votre prévention favorable je ne saurois jamais me résoudre à mettre moi-même mon ouvrage en Anglo-François. On ne sait jamais qu'une langue à la fois, et même en vous écrivant, je sens combien ma pensée se courbe sous le poïds de ces entraves étrangères. La composition du second volume m'offre une occupation plus intéressante pour moi, je n'ose pas ajouter, et pour le public.

Ne seroit-il pas tems, Madame, de nous renvoyer nos bonnes gens Milord et Milady Lucan? Etes vous contente de M. Fox? Daignez m'écrire

avec

avec une confiance dont je n'abuserai jamais et soyez persuadée de mon devouement le plus inaltérable.

N° XCVIII.

M. LECLERC DE SEPTCHENES *à M.* GIBBON.

Rue de Grammont, ce 28 Décembre, 1776.

MONSIEUR,

JE suis pénétré de tout ce que vous me marquez d'obligeant. Vous avez la bonté de m'encourager; que ne ferois-je point pour mériter votre approbation? Votre ouvrage a ici le plus grand succès; et quoiqu'il ait perdu un grand nombre de ses beautés, on n'en est pas moins frappé de la grandeur et de la majesté du plan. Le public semble désirer que je continue; je suis occupé maintenant à la seconde partie; et je crois pouvoir vous assurer qu'elle ne tardera pas beaucoup à paroître. Depuis trois semaines j'ai traduit jusqu'au paragraphe de la page 267 qui a pour titre *Second Expedition of the Goths.* Je me croirois trop heureux, si vous vouliez avoir la complaisance d'examiner mon travail au lieu de vous envoyer les feuilles au sortir de la presse, comme vous me le demandez. Je vous ferai tenir mon manuscrit, si vous voulez me le permettre, avant de le livrer à l'impression; vous serez bien plus libre de faire les changemens qui vous paraîtront nécessaires. J'ai déjà reçu les observations que vous m'aviez annoncées: elles m'ont éclairé sur une infinité de fautes considérables. Vous ne devez pas douter qu'elles ne me soient fort utiles par la suite. Je vois avec la plus grande peine combien

combien mon premier volume a été mal exécuté. Obligé d'aller à Fontainebleau pendant qu'on l'imprimoit, il ne m'a pas été possible de corriger moi-même les épreuves; et fallut-il sacrifier tous les exemplaires qui ont été tirés, je donnerai certainement une autre édition, où je profiterai de vos remarques. Soyez bien persuadé, Monsieur, que je ne négligerai rien de ce qui peut vous intéresser. J'aurois dû commencer par vous demander excuse de mon étourderie; je m'étois figuré que comme membre du parlement vous ne payez aucun port. Mon intention n'étoit surement pas de vous occasioner des frais si considérables. Je ne prévois pas pouvoir retourner de sitôt à Londres. D'ailleurs votre ouvrage me retient dans ce moment-ci à Paris. Dois-je espérer que vous exécuterez le projet que vous m'annoncez? Je serois bien flatté d'avoir l'honneur de vous connoître, et de pouvoir vous assurer des sentimens d'estime et de considération avec lesquels je suis,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant Serviteur,

LECLERC DE SEPTCHENES.

M. de Foncemagne de l'Académie Française m'a chargé de le rappeller à votre souvenir, et de vous dire qu'il n'a point oublié le présent que vous lui avez fait il y a quelques années de votre ouvrage sur l'Etude de la Littérature.

N°

N° XCIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Bentinck-street, Jan. 18th, 1777.

As I presume, my Lady does not make a practice of tumbling down stairs every day after dinner, by this time the colours must have faded, and the high places (I mean the temples) are reduced to a proper level. But what, in the name of the great prince, is the meaning of her declining the Urban expedition? Is it the spontaneous result of her own proud spirit? or does it proceed from the secret machinations of her domestic tyrant? At all events, I expect you will both remember your engagement of next Saturday in Bentinck-street, with Donna Catherina, the Mountaineer,* &c. Things go on very prosperously in America. Howe is himself in the Jerseys, and will push at least as far as the Delaware River. The continental (perhaps *now* the rebel) army is in a great measure dispersed, and Washington, who wishes to cover Philadelphia, has not more than six or seven thousand men with him. Clinton designs to conquer Rhode Island in his way home. But, what *I* think of much greater consequence, a province made its submission, and desired to be reinstated in the peace of the King. It is indeed only poor little Georgia; and the application was made to Governor Tonyn of Florida. Some disgust at a violent step of the Congress, who removed the President of their Provincial Assembly, a leading and popular man,

* The Hon. General Simon Fraser.

co

co-operated with the fear of the Indians, who began to amuse themselves with the exercise of scalping on their Back Settlements. Town fills, and we are mighty agreeable. Last year, on the Queen's birth-day, Sir G. Warren had his diamond star cut off his coat; this day the same accident happened to him again, with another star worth seven hundred pounds. He had better compound by the year. Adieu.

N° C.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

Janvier 23, 1777.

VOTRE entretien, Monsieur, a toujours été un grand plaisir de ma vie, car vous réunissez l'intérêt pour les petites choses, l'enthousiasme pour les grandes, l'abondance des idées, à l'attention pour celles des autres, et une légère causticité, ame de la conversation, à l'indulgence du moment, la sureté du caractère, et le courage de l'amitié. Si donc j'ai tardé à vous répondre, ce n'est pas que j'ignore le prix de votre correspondance, je le sçavois avant d'avoir lu vos lettres; mais combien elles me l'ont mieux appris encore! ah! ne dites jamais que votre pensée se *courbe sous le poids de les entraves étrangères*, ou si cela est, *vous dansez avec vos fers;* c'est à vous à nous apprendre à parler, après nous avoir appris à penser; et cette gradation est assez dans la nature.

Je suis livrée à un genre de vie étranger à mes goûts, et qui remplit tous mes momens, sans me

permettre d'en employer aucun. C'est avec cet esprit préoccupé que j'ai reçeu Mr. Fox. Je desirois de le connoître depuis long tems, et je vous remercie de m'en avoir donné les moyens; vous voyez que je n'entends pas l'art de faire *mousser les graces*, pour me servir de la phrase d'un de nos beaux-esprits; si vous voulez juger de mon empressement à vous plaire, envoyez moi Mr. Western ou Sir John Brute. Je reviens à Mr. Fox: on diroit qu'il a dans sa tête l'ordre qu'il a banni de ses actions; il est bien par tout; il sçait tout, il parle à merveille de tout; enfin on trouve autant de convenances et d'ensemble entre toutes les facultés de son esprit que de disparates entre son esprit et son caractère; et je crains qu'il n'ait pour les mœurs, et pour toute espèce de principe une indifférence pire que le vice; comme la froideur est plus à craindre que l'infidélité.

Le premier volume de la traduction de votre ouvrage avoit déjà paru quand je reçus votre dernière Lettre; il n'étoit plus tems de parler à M. Suard: d'ailleurs M. de Septchenes mérite des égards, et s'il manque à son stile cette finesse qui tient à l'habitude de la société, cette chaleur et cette énergie qui caractérise le créateur de la pensée, et cette harmonie que l'habitude des sentimens doux et passionnés donne encore plus que l'exercice de l'oreille; il a, en revanche, de la correction, de la facilité, et même de l'élégance; et puisque vous êtes assez malheureux pour que Monsieur Gibbon n'ait pas voulu vous traduire je me réjouis de vous voir en si bonnes mains.

Adieu,

Adieu donc, Monsieur; je gémis de ne pouvoir prolonger ma lettre, j'écris pour vous seul, comme vous voyez. Une entière confiance est la première preuve d'estime; venez jouir de vos succès, venez aussi jouir de l'amitié de deux personnes qui vous sont véritablement et tendrement dévouées.

Permettez moi de garder le silence sur M. le Texier, et croyez que votre recommendation auroit une grande influence si ce que vous demandez n'étoit pas absolument impossible.

N° CI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Almack's, Wednesday Evening.

IN due obedience to thy dread commands I write.

But what shall I say? My life, though more lively than yours, is almost as uniform. A very little reading and writing in the morning, bones or guts* from two to four, pleasant dinners from five to eight, and afterwards clubs, with an occasional assembly, or supper. America affords nothing very satisfactory; though we have many flying reports, you may be assured that we are ignorant of the consequences of Trenton, &c. Charles Fox is now at my elbow, declaiming on the impossibility of keeping America, since a victorious army has been unable to maintain any extent of posts in the single province of Jersey. Lord North is out of danger (we trembled for his important existence).

* Mr. Gibbon at this time attended Dr. Hunter's Anatomical Lectures.

I now expect that my Lady and you should fix the time for the promised visitation to Bentinck-street. March and April are open, chuse. Adieu.

N° CII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

1777.

YOU deserve, and we exult in your weather and disappointments. Why would you bury yourself? I dined in Downing-street Thursday last; and I think Wedderburne was at least as agreeable a companion as your timber-surveyor could be. Lee is certainly taken, but Lord North does not apprehend he is coming home. We are not clear whether he behaved with courage or pusillanimity when he surrendered himself; but Colonel Keene told me to-day, that he had seen a letter from Lee since his confinement. "He imputes his being taken to the alertness of Harcourt, and cowardice of his own guard; hopes he shall meet his fate with fortitude; but laments that freedom is not likely to find a resting-place in any part of the globe." It is said, he was to succeed Washington. We know nothing certain of the Hessians; but there *has* been a blow. Adieu.

N° CIII.

The Same to the Same.

Saturday Night, April 12th, 1777.

YOUR dispatch is gone to ***, and I flatter myself that by your assistance I shall be enabled to lose

lose a thousand pounds upon Lenborough before I return from Paris. The day of my departure is not absolutely fixed; Sunday seven-night, the twenty-seventh instant, is talked of: but if any India business should come on after the Civil List, it will occasion some delay, otherwise things are in great forwardness. Mrs. Gibbon is an enemy to the whole plan; and I must answer, in a long letter, two very ingenious objections which she has started. 1st, That I shall be confined, or put to death by the priests; and, 2dly, That I shall sully my *moral* character, by making love to Necker's wife. Before I go, I will consult Newton, about a power of attorney for you. By the bye, I wish you would remember a sort of promise, and give me one day before I go. We talk chiefly of the Marquis de la Fayette, who was here a few weeks ago. He is about twenty, with an hundred and thirty thousand livres a year; the nephew of Noailles, who is ambassador here. He has bought the Duke of Kingston's yacht, and is gone to join the Americans. The Court *appear* to be angry with him. Adieu.

N° CIV.

The Same to the Same.

Atwood's, Saturday Night, April 19th, 1777.

It is not possible as yet to fix the day of my departure. That circumstance depends on the state of India, and will not be determined till the General Court of next Wednesday. I know from the *first*

authority, if the violence of the Proprietors about the Pigot, can be checked in the India-house by the influence of a Government majority, the Minister does not wish to exert the omnipotence of Parliament; and I shall be dismissed from hence time enough to set forwards on Thursday the first of May. On the contrary, should we be involved in those perplexing affairs, they may easily detain me till the middle of next month. But as all this is very uncertain, I direct you and my Lady to appear in town to-morrow seven-night. I have many things to say. We have been animated this week, and, notwithstanding the strict economy recommended by Charles Fox and John Wilkes, we have paid the Royal debts. Adieu.

N° CV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Monday Night, April 21st, 1777.

BAD news from Hampshire.——Support Hugonin, comfort me; correct or expel Winton; sell Lenborough, and remove my temporal cares.—When do you arrive?

N° CVI.

The Same to the Same.

Wednesday Night, April 23d, 1777.

IT is uncertain whether India comes to Westminster this year, and it is certain that Gibbon goes to Paris next Saturday seven-night. Therefore

fore Holroyd must appear in town the beginning of next week. Gibbon wants the cordial of his presence before the journey. My Lady *must* come.

N° CVII.

The Same to the Same.

Dover, Tuesday Evening, May 6th, 1777.

My expedition does not begin very auspiciously. The wind, which for some days had been fair, paid me the compliment of changing on my arrival; and, though I immediately secured a vessel, it has been impossible to make the least use of it during the whole of this tedious day. It seems doubtful, whether I shall get out to-morrow morning; and the Captain assures me, that the passage will have the double advantage of being both cold and rough. Last night a small privateer, fitted out at Dunkirk, with a commission from Dr. Franklin, attacked, took, and has carried into Dunkirk Road, the Harwich Packet. The King's messenger had just time to throw his dispatches over-board. He passed through this town about four o'clock this afternoon, in his return to London. As the alarm is now given, our American friend will probably remain quiet, or will be soon caught; so that I have not *much* apprehension for my personal safety; but if so daring an outrage is not followed by punishment and restitution, it may become a very serious business, and may possibly shorten my stay at Paris.

 Adieu.

Adieu. I shall write by the first opportunity, either from Calais or Philadelphia.

N° CVIII.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mr.* HOLROYD.

Calais, Wednesday, May 7th, 1777.

Post nubila Phœbus. A pleasant passage, an excellent house, a good dinner, with Lord Coleraine, whom I found here. Easy Custom-house officers, fine weather, &c. I am detained to-night by the temptation of a French comedy, in a theatre at the end of Dessein's garden; but shall be in motion to-morrow early, and hope to dine at Paris Saturday. Adieu. I think I am a punctual correspondent; but this beginning is too good to last.

N° CIX.

Dr. WILLIAM ROBERTSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

SIR, College of Edinburgh, June 5th, 1777.

I HAVE desired Mr. Strahan to take the liberty of sending you, in my name, a copy of the History of America, which I hope you will do me the honour of accepting, as a testimony, not only of my respect, but of my gratitude, for the instruction which I have received from your writings, as well as the credit you have done me, by the most obliging manner in which you have mentioned my name. I wish the present work may not diminish sentiments so flattering to me. I have taken much pains to obtain the approbation of those whose good

good opinion one ought to be solicitous to secure, and I trust that my industry at least will be applauded.

An unlucky indisposition prevented me from executing a scheme which I had formed, of passing two months of last spring in London. The honour of being made known to you, was one of the pleasures with which I had flattered myself. But I hope to be more fortunate next year; and beg that you will believe that I am, with great respect, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

N° CX.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mr.* HOLROYD.

Paris, July 14th, 1777.

THOUGH amusement is my principal object, I do not entirely lose sight of the Decline and Fall, which will derive some advantages from the books that I have either purchased or consulted. You will not be sorry to hear that Mr. D'Anville has undertaken four Maps of Roman Geography of a size and nature suited to the History.*

N° CXI.

Mr. GIBBON *to Dr.* ROBERTSON.

SIR, Paris, 1777.

WHEN I ventured to assume the character of Historian, the first, the most natural, but at the

* It is much to be regretted that Mr. D'Anville did not perform this engagement. S.

same

same time the most ambitious, wish which I entertained, was to obtain the approbation of Dr. Robertson and of Mr. Hume; two names which friendship united, and which posterity will never separate. I shall not therefore attempt to dissemble, though I cannot easily express, the pleasure which I received from your obliging letter, as well as from the intelligence of your most valuable present. The satisfaction which I should otherwise have enjoyed, in common with the public, will now be heightened by a sentiment of a more personal and flattering nature; and I shall frequently whisper to myself, that I have in some measure deserved the esteem of the writer whom I admire.

A short excursion which I have made to this place, during the summer months, has occasioned some delay in my receiving your letter, and will prevent my possessing, till my return, the copy of your History, which you so politely desired Mr. Strahan to send me. But I have already gratified the eagerness of my impatience; and although I was obliged to return the book much sooner than I could have wished, I have seen enough to convince me, that the present publication will support, and if possible, will extend the fame of the author; that the materials are collected with diligence, and arranged with skill; that the first book contains a curious and satisfactory account of the progress of discovery, that the achievements, the sufferings, and the crimes of the Spanish adventurers are related with a temperate spirit; and that the most original, perhaps the most curious, portion of the

the history of human manners is at length rescued from the hands of sophists and declaimers. Lord Stormont, and the few in this capital, who have had an opportunity of perusing the History of America, unanimously concur in the same sentiments. Your work is already become a favourite topic of public conversation; and M. Suard is repeatedly pressed, in my hearing, to fix the time when his translation will appear.

I flatter myself you will not abandon your design of visiting London next winter; as I already anticipate, in my own mind, the advantages which I shall derive from so pleasing and so honourable a connection. In the mean while, I should esteem myself happy, if you could think of any literary commission, in the execution of which I might be useful to you at Paris, where I propose to stay till very near the meeting of Parliament. Let me, for instance, suggest an inquiry, which cannot be indifferent to you, and which might perhaps be within my reach. A few days ago I dined with Bagniouski, the famous adventurer, who escaped from his exile at Kamschatka, and returned into Europe by Japan and China. His narrative was amusing, though I know not how far his veracity, in point of circumstances, may safely be trusted. It was his original design to penetrate through the North East passage; and he actually followed the coast of Asia as high as the latitude of 67° 35′, till his progress was stopped by the ice, in a Streight between the two Continents, which was only seven leagues broad. Thence he descended along the coast

coast of America, as low as Cape Mendocin; but was repulsed by contrary winds, in his attempts to reach the port of Acapulco. The Journal of his Voyage, with his original Charts, is now at Versailles, in the *Depôt des Affaires Etrangères;* and if you conceived that it would be of any use to you for a second edition, I would try what might be obtained; though I am not ignorant of that mean jealousy which you yourself have experienced, and so deservedly stigmatised. I am, &c.

N° CXII.

Dr. ROBERTSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

SIR,

I HAD the honour of your obliging letter, and I should be a very proud man indeed, if I were not vain of the approbation which you are pleased to bestow upon me. As you will now have had an opportunity to peruse the book, which you had only seen when you wrote to me, I indulge myself in the hopes, that the favourable opinion you had formed of it, is not diminished. I am much pleased with your mentioning my friendship with Mr. Hume; I have always considered that as one of the most fortunate and honourable circumstances of my life. It is a felicity of the age and country in which we live, that men of letters can enter the same walk of science, and go on successfully, without feeling one sentiment of envy or rivalship. In the intercourse between Mr. Hume and me, we always found *something to blame,* as well as *something*

thing to commend. I had received frequently very valuable criticisms on my performances from him; and I have sometimes ventured to offer him my strictures on his works. Permit me to hope for the same indulgence from you. If, in reading the History of America, any thing, either in the matter or style, has occurred to you as reprehensible, I will deem it a most obliging favour if you will communicate it freely to me. I am certain of profiting by such a communication.

I return you thanks for your frank offer of exe cuting any literary commission for me. I accept of it without ceremony, and am flattered with the idea of receiving such aid from your hands. I know nothing of Bagniouski's Adventures, but what was published in some newspaper. If one can rely on his veracity, what he relates must be very interesting to me. If you had been writing the History of America, the question concerning the mode of peopling it, might not perhaps have occupied your attention very much. But it was proper for me to consider it more fully. Bagniouski (if he may be credited) has seen what it may be useful for me to know. I can see no reason why the Court of France should be shy about communicating his Journal, and the Charts which illustrate it; possibly my name may operate somewhat towards obtaining a copy of both; your interposition, I am confident, will do a great deal. It will be very illiberal indeed, if such a communication were refused. My Lord Stormont (by whose attention I have been much honoured) would not decline

decline to give his aid, were that necessary. But if your Court resembles that of Spain, I am afraid every proposal from an ambassador is received with some degree of jealousy. Your own private application will, I apprehend, be more effectual. As it is probable that a second edition may go to press early in the winter, it will add to the favour, if you can soon inform me concerning the success of your negociation. As this is something in the style of the *Corps Diplomatique*, allow me to recommend one of its members to you. Mr. Fullarton, the new secretary of the embassy, is a particular friend of mine. He is a young man of such qualities both of head and heart, that I am sure you will esteem and love him. Please remember me to him. I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your obliged humble servant,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

N° CXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Paris, June 16th, 1777.

I TOLD you what would infallibly happen, and you know enough of the nature of the beast not to be surprized at it. I have now been at Paris exactly five weeks; during which time I have not written to any person whatsoever within the British dominions, except two lines of notification to Mrs. Gibbon. The dæmon of procrastination has at length yielded to the genius of friendship, assisted indeed by the powers of fear and shame. But when I have

I have seated myself before a table, and begin to revolve all that I have seen and tasted during this busy period, I feel myself oppressed and confounded; and I am very near throwing away the pen, and resigning myself to indolent despair. A complete history would require a volume, at least, as corpulent as the Decline and Fall; and if I attempt to select and abridge, besides the difficulty of the choice, there occur so many things which cannot properly be entrusted to paper, and so many others of too slight a texture to support the journey, that I am almost tempted to reserve for our future conversations the detail of my pleasures and occupations. But as I am sensible that you are *rigid* and impatient, I will try to convey, in a few words, a general idea of my situation as a man of the world, and as a man of letters. You remember that the Neckers were my principal dependance; and the reception which I have met with from them very far surpassed my most sanguine expectations. I do not indeed lodge in their house, (as it might incite the jealousy of the husband, and procure me a lettre de cachet,) but I live very much with them, and dine and sup whenever they have company, which is almost every day, and whenever I like it, for they are not in the least *exigeans*. Mr. Walpole gave me an introduction to Madame du Deffand, an agreeable young lady of eighty-two years of age, who has constant suppers, and the best company in Paris. When you see the Duke of Richmond, he will give you an account of that house, where I meet him almost every evening.

ing. Ask him about Madame de Cambis. I have met the Duke of Choiseul at his particular request, dined by *accident* with Franklin, conversed with the Emperor, been presented at court, and gradually, or rather rapidly, I find my acquaintance spreading over the most valuable parts of Paris. They pretend to like me, and whatever you may think of French professions, I am convinced that some at least are sincere. On the other hand, I feel myself easy and happy in their company, and only regret that I did not come over two or three months sooner. Though Paris throughout the summer promises me a very agreeable society, yet I am hurt every day by the departure of men and women whom I begin to know with some familiarity, the departure of officers for their governments and garrisons, of bishops for their dioceses, and even of country gentlemen for their estates, as a rural taste gains ground in this country. So much for the general idea of my acquaintance; details would be endless, yet unsatisfactory. You may add to the pleasures of society those of the spectacles and promenades, and you will find that I lead a very agreeable life; let me just condescend to observe, that it is not extravagant. After decking myself out with silks and silver, the ordinary establishment of coach, lodging, servants, eating, and pocket expenses, does not exceed sixty pounds *per* month. Yet I have two footmen in handsome liveries behind my coach, and my apartment is hung with damask. Adieu for the present: I have more to say, but were I to attempt any farther progress,

progress, you must wait another post; and you have already waited long enough, of all conscience.

Let me just in two words give you an idea of my day. I am now going (nine o'clock) to the King's library, where I shall stay till twelve; as soon as I am dressed, I set out to dine with the Duke de Nivernois: shall go from thence to the French comedy, into the Princess de Beauveau's loge grillée, and cannot quite determine whether I shall sup at Madame du Deffand's, Madame Necker's, or the Sardinian Ambassadress's. Once more adieu.

I embrace my Lady and *bambini*. I shall with cheerfulness execute any of her commissions.

N° CXIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Paris, August 13th, 1777.

WELL, and who is the culprit now? Thus far had I written in the pride of my heart, and fully determined to inflict an epistle upon you, even before I received any answer to my former; I was very near a bull. But this forward half line lay ten days barren and inactive, till its generative powers were excited by the missive which I received yesterday. What a wretched piece of work do we seem to be making of it in America! The greatest force which any European power ever ventured to transport into that continent, is not strong enough even to attack the enemy; the naval strength of Great Britain is not sufficient to prevent

the Americans (they have almost lost the appellation of rebels) from receiving every assistance that they wanted; and in the mean time you are obliged to call out the militia to defend your own coasts against their privateers. You possibly may expect from me some account of the designs and policy of the French court, but I choose to decline that task for two reasons: 1st, Because you may find them laid open in every newspaper; and 2dly, Because I live too much with their courtiers and ministers to know any thing about them. I shall only say, that I am not under any immediate apprehensions of a war with France. It is much more pleasant as well as profitable to view in safety the raging of the tempest, occasionally to pick up some pieces of the wreck, and to improve their trade, their agriculture, and their finances, while the two countries are *lento collisa duello.* Far from taking any step to put a speedy end to this astonishing dispute, I should not be surprised if next summer they were to lend their cordial assistance to England, as to the weaker party. As to my personal engagement with the D. of R. I recollect a few slight skirmishes, but nothing that deserves the name of a general engagement. The extravagance of some disputants, both French and English, who have espoused the cause of America, sometimes inspires me with an extraordinary vigour. Upon the whole, I find it much easier to defend the justice than the policy of our measures; but there are certain cases, where whatever is repugnant to sound policy ceases to be just.

The

The more I see of Paris, the more I like it. The regular course of the society in which I live is easy, polite, and entertaining; and almost every day is marked by the acquisition of some new acquaintance, who is worth cultivating, or who, at least, is worth remembering. To the great admiration of the French, I regularly dine and regularly sup, drink a dish of strong coffee after each meal, and find my stomach a citizen of the world. The spectacles, (particularly the Italian, and above all the French comedies,) which are open the whole summer, afford me an agreeable relaxation from company; and to shew you that I frequent them from taste, and not from idleness, I have not yet seen the Colisée, the Vauxhall, the Boulevards, or any of those places of entertainment which constitute Paris to most of our countrymen. Occasional trips to dine or sup in some of the thousand country-houses which are scattered round the environs of Paris, serve to vary the scene. In the mean while the summer insensibly glides away, and the fatal month of October approaches, when I must change the house of Madame Necker for the House of Commons. I regret that I could not choose the winter, instead of the summer, for this excursion: I should have found many valuable persons, and should have preserved others whom I have lost as I began to know them. The Duke de Choiseul, who deserves attention both for himself, and for keeping the best house in Paris, passes seven months of the year in Touraine; and though I have been tempted, I consider with horror a

journey of sixty leagues into the country. The Princess of Beauveau, who is a most superior woman, has been absent above six weeks, and does not return till the 24th of this month. A large body of recruits will be assembled by the Fontainebleau journey; but in order to have a thorough knowledge of this splendid country, I ought to stay till the month of January; and if I could be sure that Opposition would be as tranquil as they were last year— I think your life has been as animated, or, at least, as tumultuous, and I envy you Lady Payne, &c. much more than either the Primate, or the Chief-justice. Let not the generous breast of my Lady be torn by the black serpents of envy. She still possesses the first place in the sentiments of her slave: but the adventure of the fan was a mere accident, owing to Lord Carmarthen. Adieu. I think you may be satisfied. I say nothing of my terrestrial affairs.

N° CXV.

M. Buffon *à M.* Gibbon.

Ce 25 Oct. 1777.

Je reçois, Monsieur, comme une marque précieuse de votre estime et de votre amitié cet excellent ouvrage que je ne connoissois que par la traduction; je le lirai avec tout l'empressement que me donnent les sentimens que vous m'avez inspiré. J'ai souvent admiré dans la conversation les traits de génie que j'aurai le plaisir de voir dans tout son développement. Recevez mes remercîmens,

Monsieur,

Monsieur, et les tendres adieux d'un homme qui vous respecte et vous aime autant et plus qu'il ne peut vous l'exprimer.

BUFFON.

N° CXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Bentinck-street, Saturday, November, 1777.

HAD you four horns as well as four eyes and four hands, I should still maintain that you are the most unreasonable monster in the creation. My pain is lively, my weakness excessive, the season cold, and only twelve days remain to the meeting. Far from thinking of trips into the country, I shall be well satisfied if I am on my legs the 20th, in the medical sense of the word. At present I am a corpse, carried about by four arms which do not belong to me. Yet I try to smile: I salute the hen and chickens. Adieu. Writing is really painful.

N° CXVII.

Madame DU DEFFAND *à M.* GIBBON.

Paris, ce 12 Novembre, 1777.

J'ATTENDOIS que M. Walpole vous eût vu, Monsieur, pour répondre à votre très aimable lettre de Calais. J'apprends aujourd'huy par lui que vous avez la goutte, qu'il vous a été rendre visite et que vous avez bien voulu lui parler beaucoup de moi. Il ne me mande point ce que vous lui en avez dit, mais votre bonté naturelle, et votre ex-

cessive indulgence ne me laissent aucune inquiétude. Il pourra vous dire à son tour combien je vous regrette; rien ne peut vous remplacer; je pense sans cesse aux momens agréables que j'ai passés avec vous; jamais je n'ai trouvé personne qui eut une conversation aussi facile, aussi charmante. Je paye bien cher le plaisir qu'elle m'a fait, elle m'a rendue bien plus difficile que je n'étois.

J'ai fort peu vu M. et Mad. Necker depuis votre départ. J'ai soupé une fois en tiers avec eux et eu une fois Mad. Necker chez moi. Nous avons parlé de M. Gibbon, et de quoi encore? de M. Gibbon, toujours de M. Gibbon. J'ai accablée Mad. de Cambis de reproches et d'injures, elle m'a paru l'être de remords et de regrets. La Comtesse de Boufflers me sçaura très bon gré si je vous parle d'elle; enfin tout ce qui vous connoit, vous estime, vous aime, et désire de vous revoir, et moi plus que personne au monde, je vous prie de le croire.

Le terme de 1779 est bien long, mais cependant j'ose me flatter de le voir arriver: je ne renonce point encore au plaisir de vous entendre, et pour me l'assurer j'ai eu recours à l'Abbé de St. Julien; il a visité mes oreilles, il entreprend ma guérison, il ne veux pas que je perde toute espérance; mais cette vertu théologale doit être précédée de celle de la foi, et l'on prétend que celle-ci ne m'est pas familière.

Ne dites point à M. Walpole la crainte que j'ai de devenir sourde; si ce malheur m'arrive, il n'est pas prochain, et je serai encore long tems, à ce que j'espère, en état d'entendre la lecture de vos lettres.

Je

Je ne me flatte pas qu'elles soient fréquentes, mais je vous prie de répondre à celle-ci et de m'apprendre des nouvelles de votre goutte; elle a grand tort de vous attaquer, vous qui sçavez si bien employer tous vos momens; elle ne devroit se placer que sur les desœuvrés.

J'attends avec impatience les deux volumes que me promet M. de Septchênes; j'ai été parfaitement contente du premier, je l'ai été aussi infiniment de votre lettre à Mad. de Cambis. Toutes les louanges que vous lui donnez sont vraies et d'un discernement exquis; c'est à vous, Monsieur, à qui il appartient de peindre.

N° CXVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.* *to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Friday, November 14th, 1777.

I DO not like this disorder on your eyes: and when I consider your temperance and activity, I cannot understand why any spring of the machine should ever be deranged. With regard to myself, the gout has behaved in a very honourable manner; after a complete conquest, and after making me feel his power for some days, the generous enemy has disdained to abuse his victory, or to torment any longer an unresisting victim. He has already ceased to torture the lower extremities of your humble servant; the swelling is so amazingly diminished, that they are no longer above twice their ordinary size. Yesterday I moved about the room with the laborious majesty of crutches; to-day I

have exchanged them for a stick; and by the beginning of next week, I hope, with due precaution, to take the air, and to inure myself for the interesting representation of Thursday. How cursedly unlucky; I wanted to see you both: a thousand things to say and to hear, and every thing of that kind broken to pieces. If you are not able to come to Bentinck-street, I must contrive to steal three or four vacant days during the session, and run down to Sheffield. The town fills, and I begin to have numerous levees, and couchees; more properly the latter. We are still in expectation, but in the mean while we believe (I mean ministers), that the news of Howe's victory and the taking of Philadelphia are true. Adieu.

N° CXIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

December 2d, 1777.

BY the inclosed you will see that America is not *yet* conquered. Opposition are very lively; and, though in the House we keep our numbers, there seems to be an universal desire of peace, even on the most humble conditions. Are you still fierce?

N° CXX.

The Same to the Same.

Monday Night, December, 1777.

I CONGRATULATE your noble firmness, as I suppose it must arise from the knowledge of some hidden

hidden resources, which will enable us to open the next campaign with new armies of fifty or sixty thousand men. But I believe you will find yourself obliged to carry on this glorious war almost alone. It would be idle to dispute any more about politics, as we shall so soon have an opportunity of a personal combat. Your journey gives me some hopes that you have not entirely lost your reason. Your bed shall be ready.

N° CXXI.

The Same to the Same.

House of Commons, Thursday, Dec. 4th, 1777.

DREADFUL news indeed! You will see them partly in the papers, and we have not yet any particulars. An English army of nearly ten thousand men laid down their arms, and surrendered prisoners of war, on condition of being sent to England, and of never serving against America. They had fought bravely, and were three days without eating. Bourgoyne is said to have received three wounds. General Fraser, with two thousand men, killed. Colonel Ackland likewise killed. A general cry for peace. Adieu. We have constant late days.

N° CXXII.

EDW. GIBBON, *Esq. to the Rev. Dr.* CHELSUM.

SIR, Bentinck-street, Feb. 20th, 1778.

THE officious readiness of offering any printed criticism to the notice of a stranger, who is himself the

the object of it, must be received either as a compliment or an insult. When Dr. Watson, the Divinity Professor of Cambridge, was so obliging as to send me his candid and ingenious apology, I thought it incumbent on me to acknowledge his politeness, and, with suitable expressions of regard, to solicit the pleasure of his acquaintance. A different mode of controversy calls for a different behaviour; and I should deem myself wanting in a just sense of my own honour, if I did not immediately return into the hands of Mr. Batt your most extraordinary present of a book, of which almost every page is stained with the epithets, I shall take leave to say the undeserved epithets, of *ungenerous, unmanly, indecent, illiberal, partial,* and in which your adversary is repeatedly charged with *being deficient in common candour;* with *studiously concealing the truth, violating the faith of history,* &c. This consideration will not however prevent me from procuring a copy of your Remarks, with the intention of correcting any involuntary mistakes, (and I cannot be conscious of any other,) which in so large a subject your industry, or that of your colleagues, may very possibly have observed. But I must not suffer myself to be diverted from the prosecution of an important work, by the invidious task of controversy, and recrimination. Whatever faults in your performance I might fairly impute to want of attention, or excess of zeal, be assured, Sir, that they shall sleep in peace; and you may safely inform your readers, that Suidas

was

was a heathen four centuries after the heathenism of the Greeks had ceased to exist in the world.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient humble Servant,
E. GIBBON.

N° CXXIII.

The Rev. Dr. CHELSUM *to* EDW. GIBBON, *Esq.*

SIR, Oxford, March 6th, 1778.

PERMIT me to assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that no insult, such as, I collect from your letter, you attribute to me, was ever intended by me.

I had reason to think from several circumstances, that my not having sent my Remarks to you in their first form, had been considered by you as a want of attention, and I was very ready to pay what others gave me reason to expect, would be received as, a mark of civility. I do not mean here to refer to Mr. Batt.

My determination was the result of a deference to the opinions of others; and it arose in no degree from an "*officious readiness*," to which you attribute it. I may be accused of an error in judgment, but I cannot justly be accused of any greater offence.

Concerned as I am at my mistake, I am most of all concerned that so esteemed a friend as Mr. Batt should have been employed in a very unpleasant mediation between us.

As it is the sole object of this letter to give you every possible assurance of my having intended a com-

remains a hope that England may obtain the preference. The two greatest countries in Europe are fairly running a race for the favour of America. Adieu.

N° CXXV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

February 28th, 1778.

* * * * * * As to politics, we should easily fill pages, and therefore had better be silent. You are mistaken in supposing that the bills are opposed; some particular objections have been stated, and in the *only* division I voted with government.

N° CXXVI.

The Same to the Same.

Almack's, Saturday Night, March 21st, 1778.

As business thickens, and you may expect me to write sometimes, I shall lay down one rule; totally to avoid political argument, conjecture, lamentation, declamation, &c. which would fill pages, not to say volumes; and to confine myself to short, authentic pieces of intelligence, for which I may be able to afford moments and lines. Hear then—The French Ambassador went off yesterday morning, not without some slight expressions of ill-humour from John Bull. Lord Stormont is probably arrived to-day. No *immediate* declaration, except on our side. A report (but vague) of an action in the Bay, between La Motte Piquet and Digby:

summer with the help of twenty thousand Russians. I fancy you are better satisfied with private than public war. The Lisbon packet in coming home met above forty of our privateers. Adieu. I hardly know whether I direct right to you, but I think Sheffield-place the surest.

N° CXXXI.

Dr. WATSON (*now Bishop of* Llandaff) *to Mr.* GIBBON.

SIR, Cambridge, January 14th, 1779.

IT will give me the greatest pleasure to have an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with Mr. Gibbon. I beg he would accept my sincere thanks for the too favourable manner in which he has spoken of a performance, which derives its chief merit from the elegance and importance of the work it attempts to oppose. I have no hope of a future existence, except that which is grounded on the truth of Christianity. I wish not to be deprived of this hope; but I should be an apostate from the mild principle of the religion I profess, if I could be actuated with the least animosity against those who do not think with me upon this, of all others, the most important subject. I beg your pardon for this declaration of my belief; but my temper is naturally open, and it ought assuredly to be without disguise to a man whom I wish no longer to look upon as an antagonist, but as a friend. I have the honour to be, with every sentiment of respect, your obliged servant,

RICHARD WATSON.

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Digby: the former has five ships and three frigates, with three large store-ships under convoy; the latter has eleven ships of the line. If the Frenchman should sail to the mouth of the Delaware, he may possibly be followed and shut up. When Franklin was received at Versailles, Deane went in the same character to Vienna, and Arthur Lee to Madrid. Notwithstanding the reports of an action in Silesia, they subside; and I have seen a letter from Eliot at Berlin of the tenth instant, without any mention of actual hostilities, and even speaking of the impending war as not absolutely inevitable. Last Tuesday the first payment of the loan of six hundred thousand pounds was certainly made; and as it would otherwise be forfeited, it is a security for the remainder. I have not yet got the intelligence you want about former prices of stock in critical times. These are surely such. *Dixi, Vale.* Send me some good news from Bucks; in spite of the war, I must sell. We want you in town. Simon Fraser is impatient; but if you come without my Lady, every door will be shut.

N° CXXVII.

The Same to the Same.

Almack's, Friday, June 12th, 1778.

* * * *'s letter gave me that sort of satisfaction which one may receive from a good physician, who, after a careful examination, pronounces your case incurable. But no more of that. I take up the pen, as I suppose by this time you begin to swear

swear at my silence. Yet literally (a bull) I have not a word to say. Since D'Estaing's fleet has passed through the Gut (I leave you to guess where it must have got out) it has been totally forgotten, and the most wonderful lethargy and oblivion, of war and peace, of Europe and of America, seems to prevail. Lord Chatham's funeral was meanly attended, and Government ingeniously contrived to secure the double odium of suffering the thing to be done, and of doing it with an ill grace. Their chief conversation at Almack's is about tents, drill-serjeants, subdivisions, firings, &c. and I am revered as a veteran. Adieu. When do you return? If it suits your evolutions, aunt Kitty and myself meditate a Sussex journey next week. I embrace my Lady.

N° CXXVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Wednesday Evening, July, 1778.

YOUR plan of operations is clear and distinct; yet, notwithstanding your zeal, and the ideas of ducal discipline, I think you will be more and longer at Sheffield-Place than you imagine. However, I am disposed to advance my journey as much as possible. I want to see you; my martial ardour makes me look to Coxheath, necessity obliges me to think of Beriton, and I feel something of a very new inclination to taste the sweets of the country. Aunt Kitty shares the same sentiments; but various obstacles will not allow us to be

be with you before Saturday, or perhaps Sunday evening; I say *evening*, as we mean to take the cool part of the day, and shall probably arrive after supper. Keppel's return has occasioned infinite and inexpressible consternation, which gradually changes into discontent against him. He is ordered out again with three or four large ships; two of ninety, two of seventy-four, and the fiftieth regiment, as marines. In the mean time the French, with a superior fleet, are masters of the sea; and our outward-bound East and West India trade is in the most imminent danger. Adieu.

N° CXXIX.

The Same to the Same.

Tuesday Night, November, 1778.

You sometimes complain that I do not send you early news; but you will now be satisfied with receiving a full and true account of all the parliamentary transactions of *next* Thursday. In town we think it an excellent piece of humour,* (the author is Tickell). Burke and C. Fox are pleased with their own speeches, but serious patriots groan that such things should be turned to farce. We seem to have a chance of an additional Dutch war: you may depend upon its being a very important business, from which we cannot extricate ourselves without either loss or shame. *Vale.*

* The title of the pamphlet—*Anticipation.*

N° CXXX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

Almack's, Wednesday Evening, 1778.

I DELAYED writing, not so much through indolence, as because I expected every post to hear from you. The state of Beriton is uncertain, incomprehensible, tremendous. It would be endless to send you the folios of Hugonin, but I have inclosed you one of his most picturesque epistles, on which you may meditate. Few offers; one, promising enough, came from a gentleman at Camberwell. I detected him, with masterly skill and diligence, to be only an attorney's clerk, without money, credit, or experience. I have written as yet in vain to Sir John Shelly, about Hearsay; perhaps you might get intelligence. I much fear that the Beriton expedition is necessary; but it has occurred to me, that if I *met*, instead of *accompanying* you, it would save me a journey of above one hundred miles. That reflection led to another of a very impudent nature; *viz.* that if I did not accompany you, I certainly could be of no use to you or myself on the spot: that I had much rather, while you examined the premises, pass the time in a horse-pond; and that I had still rather pass it in my library with the Decline and Fall. But that would be an effort of friendship worthy of Theseus or Pirithous: modern times would hardly credit, much less imitate, such exalted virtue. No news from America; yet there are people, large ones too, who talk of conquering it next summer

N° CXXXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

February 6th, 1779.

You are quiet and peaceable, and do not bark, as usual, at my silence. To reward you, I would send you some news; but we are asleep; no foreign intelligence, except the capture of a frigate; no certain account from the West Indies, and a dissolution of Parliament, which seems to have taken place since Christmas. In the papers you will see negociations, changes of departments, &c. and I have *some* reason to believe, that those reports are not entirely without foundation. Portsmouth is no longer an object of speculation; the whole stream of all men, and all parties, runs one way. Sir Hugh* is disgraced, ruined, &c. &c.; and as an old wound has broken out again, they say he must have his leg cut off as soon as he has time. In a night or two we shall be in a blaze of illumination, from the zeal of naval heroes, land patriots, and tallow-chandlers; the last are not the least sincere. I want to hear some details of your military and familiar proceedings. By your silence I suppose you admire Davis, and dislike my pamphlet; yet such is the public folly, that we have a second edition in the press: the fashionable style of the clergy, is to say they have not read it. If Maria does not take care, I shall write a much sharper

* Sir Hugh Paliser; perhaps no man was ever more cruelly used by the public, through a virulent party spirit. S.

inveotive,

invective against her, for *not* answering my diabolical book. My Lady carried it down, with a solemn promise that I should receive an *unassisted* French letter. Yet I embrace the little animal, as well as my Lady, and the *Spes altera Romæ*. Adieu.

There is a buz about a peace, and Spanish mediation.

N° CXXXIII.

Dr. WILLIAM ROBERTSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, College of Edinburgh, March 10th, 1779.

I SHOULD have long since returned you thanks for the pamphlet you took the trouble of sending to me. I hope you are not one of those who estimate kindness by punctuality in correspondence. I read your little performance with much eagerness, and some solicitude. The latter soon ceased. The tone you take with your adversary in this *impar congressus* appears to me perfectly proper; and, though I watched you with some attention, I have not observed any expression which I should, on your own account, wish to be altered. Davis's book never reached us here. Our distance from the Capital operates somewhat like time. Nothing but what has intrinsic value comes down to us. We hear sometimes of the worthless and vile things that float for a day on the stream, but we seldom see them. I am satisfied, however, that it was necessary for you to animadvert on a man who had brought accusations against you, nich

no gentleman can allow to be made without notice. I am persuaded, that the persons who instigated the man to such an illiberal attack, will now be ashamed of him. At the same time I applaud your resolution, of not degrading yourself, by a second conflict, with such antagonists.

I am ashamed to tell you, how little I have done since I had the pleasure of seeing you. I have been prevented, partly by ill health, partly by causes which I shall explain when we meet: I hope that may be next spring. Believe me to be with great truth,

Your affectionate and faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

N° CXXXIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

May 7th, 1779.

BY some of the strangest accidents, (Lord ****** ********'s indiscretion, Rigby's boldness, &c.) which it would require ten pages to explain, our wise resolution of last Thursday is changed, and Lord Cornwallis will be examined; Sir William Howe's inquiry will proceed, and we shall be oppressed by the load of information. You have heard of the Jersey invasion; every body praises Arbuthnot's decided spirit. Conway went last night to throw himself into the island.*

* Jersey, of which he was Governor.

N°

N° CXXXV.

The Same to the Same.

May, 1779.

ALAS! alas! fourteen ships of the line: you understand by this, that you have not got a single long-boat. Ministry are more crest-fallen than I ever knew them, with the last intelligence; and I am sorry to say, that I see a smile of triumph on some opposition faces. Though the business of the West Indies may still produce something, I am much afraid that we shall have a campaign of immense expense, and little or no action. The most busy scene is at present in the House of Commons; and we shall be involved, during a great part of next month, in tedious, fruitless, but, in my opinion, proper inquiries. You see how difficult it would be for me to visit Brighton; and I fancy I must content myself with receiving you on your passage to Ireland. Indeed, I much want to have a *very serious* conversation with you. Another reason, which must in a great measure pin me to Bentinck-street, is the Decline and Fall. I have resolved to bring out the *suite* in the course of next year; and though I have been tolerably diligent, so much remains to be done, that I can hardly spare a single day from the shop. I can guess but one reason which should prevent you from supposing that the picture in Leicester Fields was intended for the Sheffield library; viz. my having told you some time ago that I was under a formal

engagement to Mr. Walpole.* Probably I should not have been in any great hurry to execute my promise, if Mr. Cadell had not strenuously urged the curiosity of the public, who may be willing to repay the exorbitant price of *fifty* guineas. It is now finished, and my friends say, that, in every sense of the word, it is a good head. Next week it will be given to Hall the engraver, and I promise you a first impression. Adieu. I embrace my Lady, and infants.

N° CXXXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* J. B. HOLROYD, *Esq.*

1779.

WHEN do you come to town? You gave me hopes of a visit, and I want to talk over things in general with you, before you march to the extremities of the West, where the sun goes to sleep in the sea. Mrs. Trevor told me, your destination was Exeter;† and I suppose nothing but truth can proceed from a pretty mouth. I have been, and am still very diligent; and, though it is a huge beast, (the Roman Empire,) yet, if I am not mistaken, I see it move a little. You seem surprised that I was able to get off Bath: very easily, the extreme shortness of our holidays was a fair excuse; her recovery of health, spirits, &c. made it less necessary, and she accepted my apology, which was however accompanied with

* The portrait, one of the best of Sir Joshua's, is at Sheffield-place.

† With the Sussex Militia, of which Mr. Holroyd was Major.

an

an offer, if she chose it, in the prettiest manner possible. A load of business in this House (I write from it) will be the amusement of the spring; motions, inquiries, taxes, &c. &c. We are now engaged in Lord Pigott's affair, brought on by a motion from the Admiral, that the Attorney General should prosecute Mr. Stratton and Council; all the Masters, Charles, Burke, Wedderburne, are of the same side, for it. The day is hot and dull; will be long: some curious evidence; one man who refused three lacks of rupees, (thirty-seven thousand five hundred pounds,) merely not to go to council; our mouths watered at such royal corruption; how pitiful is our insular bribery! A letter from aunt Hester. Adieu.

N° CXXXVII.

The Same to the Same.

July 2d, 1779.

THE inclosed will inform you of an event,* not the most disagreeable of those which I have lately experienced. I have only to add, that it was effected by the firm and sincere friendship of the Attorney General. So many incidents have happened, that I hardly know how to talk of news. You will learn that the Lords have strangely castrated the new Militia Bill. The Ferrol squadron, eight or nine ships, have joined the French. The numbers stand on our side thirty-two, on theirs

* His appointment as Lord of Trade.

thirty-

thirty-seven; but our force is at least equal, and the general consternation much dispelled. If you do not Hibernize, you might at least Bentinckize. I embrace, &c. Parliament will be prorogued to-morrow.

N° CXXXVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, Bentinck-street, Sept. 17th, 1779.

I AM glad to hear of the very beneficial effects you have derived from your recent friendship with the goats;* and as I cannot discover in what respect this poor country is more prosperous or secure than it was last year, I must consider your present confidence as a proof that you view the prospect through a purer medium, and a glass of a more cheerful colour. I find myself so much more susceptible of private friendship than of public spirit, that I am very well satisfied with that conclusion. My summer has been passed in the town and neighbourhood, which I still maintain to be the best society and the best retirement; the latter, however, has been sometimes interrupted by the Colonel of Dragoons † with a train of serjeants, trumpets, recruits, &c. &c. My own time is much and

* At Abergavenny.

† On the appearance of the combined fleets of France and Spain on the coast of England, Colonel Holroyd offered to raise a legion of Hussars and Light Infantry. His offer was accepted as to the cavalry, and it was called the Sussex, or 22d regiment of Light Dragoons.

agreeably

agreeably employed in the prosecution of my business. After doing much more than I expected to have done within the time, I find myself much less advanced than I expected: yet I begin to reckon, and as well as I can calculate, I believe, that in twelve or fourteen months I shall be brought to-bed, perhaps of twins; may they live, and prove as healthy as their eldest brother! With regard to the little foundling which so many friends or enemies chose to lay at my door, I am perfectly innocent, even of the knowledge of that production; and all the faults or merits of the History of Opposition must, as I am informed, be imputed to Macpherson, the author or translator of Fingal. Dear Madam, most truly yours.

N° CXXXIX.

Mad. la Comtesse DE GENLIS *à M.* GIBBON.

De Paris, ce 15 Octobre, 1779.

JE trouve une occasion sûre, pour l'Angleterre, et je ne puis me refuser, Monsieur, au plaisir de me rappeller à votre souvenir, et de vous envoyer un ouvrage qui a réussi ici au delà de toutes mes espérances, et sans doute de son mérite. Je l'ai fait imprimer pour le vendre au profit de trois malheureux militaires, tous trois frères, et qu'un procès a réduit dans l'état le plus déplorable; et le bonheur de leur être utile me fait bien mieux jouir du succès de cet ouvrage que la vanité assez ordinaire à un auteur. Ce 1^er^ vol. sera suivi de trois autres qui paroîtront dans trois semaines; le 2^d^ encore

pour les jeunes personnes, le 3^eme^ pour l'éducation des hommes, et le 4^eme^ pour les enfans des négocians, artisans et marchands, classe jusqu'ici injustement oubliée par tous ceux qui ont écrit sur l'éducation. Je suis bien fâchée de ne pouvoir vous envoyer les autres volumes, d'autant mieux que vous y auriez vu un éloge de la bienfaisance et de la générosité des Anglois, qui naissoit naturellement du récit d'une histoire que j'ai vu arriver à Spa, et qui étoit véritablement bien intéressante. J'ai déjà eu l'honneur de vous écrire, Monsieur, il y a un an, et une très longue lettre, dans laquelle je vous remerciois de la bonté que vous aviez eue de vous charger de m'arrêter un logement à Londres, et je vous annonçois que le malheur des tems me privoit du plaisir de voir un païs que j'ai toujours si ardemment désiré connoître. Je m'en suis dédommagé en quelque sorte en faisant connoissance avec une partie des grands hommes qui ont illustré l'Angleterre. Je sais enfin parfaitement l'anglois, et pour vous en donner l'idée je lis Shakespear avec la plus grande facilité ; mais mon poëte favori c'est Milton, et je l'aime au point que je sais une très considérable partie de son admirable Paradis Perdu, par cœur. Je sais aussi beaucoup de vers de Pope ; je crois que je vous ferois rire si vous me les entendiez déclamer, cependant les Anglois m'entendent, et c'est tout ce que je veux. J'étois même bien tentée de vous écrire en anglois, mais j'ai pensé que vous me trouveriez trop de présomption, et c'est bien assez d'avoir celle d'envoyer à l'auteur d'un des plus beaux ouvrages d'histoire que nous ayons, un ouvrage fait

pour

pour des enfans. J'en fais un présentement qui sans doute est bien au-dessus de mes forces, mais il est toujours noble de vivre à un but élevé, avec une foible espérance d'y atteindre. C'est un ouvrage sur l'histoire, dont les quatre premiers volumes paroîtront vers le mois de Juin prochain. Le plan en est si vaste que je n'ose vous le détailler; quelques personnes que j'ai consultées m'ont encouragée dans cette entreprise, et je puis me flatter du moins qu'on éprouvera quelque surprise en songeant qu'un semblable travail est sorti des mains d'une femme de trente ans. Adieu, Monsieur, pardonnez moi la longueur de cette lettre; donnez moi de vos nouvelles, je vous en conjure. Je désire vivement savoir si ces petites pièces ne vous ont point ennuyées; votre suffrage seroit d'un bien grand prix pour moi. J'ai le plaisir de voir jouir ici de tous les côtés en société et même sur des théâtres publics ces drames dont la seule morale fait tout le mérite; on les traduit même en italien à Gènes, et en allemand à Hambourg: mais j'avoue que je serois bien plus flattée qu'elles le fussent en anglois, car si je n'étois pas françoise, et si après la France on me donnoit le choix d'une patrie, bien certainement je voudrois être angloise. Je ne connois que deux nations sur la terre, la mienne et la vôtre, pourquoi faut-il . . . . je ne veux pas m'arrêter à de si tristes réflexions, j'aime mieux espérer qu'une heureuse paix comblera bientôt tous les désirs des bons citoyens des deux nations. Si vous avez la bonté de donner votre réponse à l'homme qui vous portera ce paquet, il me le rendra surement: et si vous voulez bien par la

la suite m'écrire par une autre voie il faut addresser vos lettres *à Madame la Comtesse de Genlis, Gouvervante de leurs Altesses Sérénissimes Mademoiselles d'Orléans, au Couvent de Bellechasse à Paris.* Je viens d'être nommée gouvervante de ces princesses, et je m'enferme avec elles le 28 de ce mois pour douze ou quinze ans. C'est un grand sacrifice à mon age, mais l'attachement rend tout facile, et j'ose croire que je justifierai une preuve de confiance qui m'honore et me touche également.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissante Servante,

DUEREST, Comtesse de GENLIS.

Du Palais Royal.

N° CXL.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esquire, to Colonel* HOLROYD, *at* Coventry.

London, Monday, February 7th, 1780.

WHEN the Attorney General informed me of the express he had just sent down to Coventry, I had not the least doubt of your embracing the bolder resolution. You are indeed obliged to him for his real friendship, which he feels and expresses warmly; on this occasion I hope it will be successful, and that in a few days you will find yourself among us at St. Stephen's in the heat of the battle. But you know that I am a dastardly, pusillanimous spirit, more inclined to fear than to hope, and not very eager in the pursuit of *expensive* vanity. On this vacancy the celerity of your motions may probably

probably prevent opposition; but at the general election your enemy the Corporation will not be asleep, and I wish, if it be not too late, to warn you against any promises or engagements which may terminate in a defeat, or at least a contest of ten thousand pounds. Adieu. I could believe (without seeing it under her paw) that my Lady wishes to leave Coventry. No news! foreign or domestic. I did not forget to mention the *companies*, but find people, as I expected, torpid. Burke makes his motion Friday; but I think the rumours of a civil war subside every day; petitions are thought less formidable; and I hear your Sussex protest* gathers signatures in the country.

N° CXLI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esquire, to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, Bentinck-street, March 10th, 1780.

WHEN you awakened me with your pen, it was my intention to have shewn some signs of life by the next post. But so uncertain are all human affairs, that I found myself arrested by a mighty unrelenting tyrant, called the gout; and though my feet were the part on which he chose to exercise his cruelty, he left me neither strength nor spirits to use my hand in relating the melancholy tale. At present, I have the pleasure of informing you, that the fever and inflammation have sub-

* Suggested and promoted by Colonel Holroyd.

sided:

sided; but the absolute weakness and monstrous swelling of my two feet confine me to my chair and flannels; and this confinement most unluckily happens at a very *nice* and important moment of parliamentary affairs. Colonel Holroyd pursues those affairs with eager and persevering zeal; and has the pleasure of undertaking more business than any three men could possibly execute.

N° CXLII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, London, June 8th, 1780.

As a Member of Parliament, I cannot be exposed to any danger,* since the House of Commons has adjourned to Monday se'nnight; as an individual, I do not conceive myself to be obnoxious. I am not apt, without duty or necessity, to thrust myself into a mob: and our part of the town is as quiet as a country village. So much for personal safety; but I cannot give the same assurances of public tranquillity: forty thousand Puritans, such as they might be in the time of Cromwell, have started out of their graves; the tumult has been dreadful; and even the remedy of military force and martial law is unpleasant. But government, with fifteen thousand regulars in town, and every gentleman (but one) on their side, must extinguish the flame. The execution of last night was severe; perhaps it

* Alluding to the disturbances occasioned by Lord George Gordon.

must

must be repeated to-night: yet, upon the whole, the tumult subsides. Colonel Holroyd was all last night in Holborn among the flames, with the Northumberland militia, and performed very bold and able service. I will write again in a post or two.

I am, dear Madam, ever yours.

N° CXLIII.

The Same to the Same.

DEAR MADAM, Bentinck-street, June 27th, 1780.

I BELIEVE we may now rejoice in our common security. All tumult has perfectly subsided, and we only think of the justice which must be properly and severely inflicted on such flagitious criminals. The measures of Government have been seasonable and vigorous; and even opposition have been forced to confess, that the military power was applied and regulated with the utmost propriety. Our danger is at an end, but our disgrace will be lasting, and the month of June, 1780, will ever be marked by a dark and diabolical fanaticism, which I had supposed to be extinct, but which actually subsists in Great Britain, perhaps beyond any other country in Europe. Our parliamentary work draws to a conclusion; and I am much more pleasingly, though laboriously, engaged in revising and correcting for the press, the continuation of my History, two volumes of which will certainly appear next winter. This business fixes me to Bentinck-street more closely than any other part of my literary labour; as it is absolutely necessary that I

should be in the midst of all the books which I have at any time used during the composition. But I feel a strong desire (irritated, like all other passions, by repeated obstacles) to escape to Bath.

Dear Madam,

Most truly yours.

N° CXLIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Colonel* HOLROYD.

July 25th, 1780.

As your motions are spontaneous, and the stations of the Lord Chief * unalterably fixed, I cannot perceive the necessity of your sending or receiving intelligence. However, your commands are obeyed. You wish I would write, as a sign of life. I am alive; but as I am immersed in the Decline and Fall, I shall only make the sign. It is made. You may suppose that we are not pleased with the junction of the fleets; nor can an ounce of West India loss be compensated by a pound of East India success: but the circuit will roll down all the news and politics of London. I rejoice to hear that the Sussex regiment of Dragoons are such well-disciplined cannibals; but I want to know when the Chief cannibal will return to his den. It would suit me better that it should happen soon. Adieu.

* Lord Mansfield.

N°

N° CXLV.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mrs.* HOLROYD, *at* Sheffield-Place.

Bentinck-street, Aug. 31st, 1780.

THE Colonel left town about seven o'clock. Could he have held a pen with each finger, and each toe, at the same time, he would have found employment for them all. He therefore named me his Secretary to signify to Sheffield-Place his health, duty, impatience, &c.

The Intrigue du Cabinet shall not be neglected. But the Intrigue du Parlement is now the universal pursuit. It will be dissolved to-morrow, the writs will be out Saturday night, and a few days will terminate the business. You probably received my *last* frank. I have *found* reason to believe that I shall never rise again, and I submit to my fate with philosophic composure. If any parcels or letters directed to me should arrive at Sheffield, you will be so good as to return them by the coach. Adieu.

E. G.

N° CXLVI.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mrs.* HOLROYD, Sheffield-Place, announcing that Mr. Holroyd was created Lord Sheffield.

Bentinck-street, Nov. 27th, 1780.

Mr. GIBBON presents his respectful compliments to Lady Sheffield, and hopes her Ladyship is in perfect health, as well as the Hon. Miss Holroyd, and the Hon. Miss Louisa Holroyd.

royd. Mr. Gibbon has not had the honour of hearing from Lord Sheffield since his Lordship reached Coventry, but supposes that the Election begins this day.

Be honest. How does this read? Do you not feel some titillations of vanity? Yet I will do you the justice to believe that they are as faint as can find place in a female (you will retort, or a male) heart, on such an auspicious event. When it is revealed to the Hon. Miss, I should recommend the loss of some ounces of noble blood. You may expect every post a formal notification, which I shall instantly dispatch. The birds, as well as I now recollect their taste, were excellent. I hope the *Voyages* still amuse. I had almost forgot to say that my seat in Parliament is deferred. Stronger and more impatient rivals have stepped before me, and I can wait, with cheerful resignation, till another opportunity. I wish the Baron's situation was as placid as mine.* No news. We are very dull. Adieu. I shall go to Bath about the 15th of next month. But—silence.

N° CXLVII.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mrs.* GIBBON, Belvedere, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, Bentinck-street, Feb. 24th, 1781.

As you have probably received my last letter of thirteen hundred pages,† I shall be very concise;

* Lord Sheffield was at that time engaged in a violently contested election for Coventry.

† Second and third volumes of the Decline and Fall.

read,

read, judge, pronounce; and believe that I sincerely agree with my friend Julian, in esteeming the praise of those only who will freely censure my defects. Next Thursday I shall be delivered to the world, for whose inconstant and malicious levity I am coolly but firmly prepared. Excuse me to Sarah.* I see more clearly than ever, the absolute necessity of confining my presents to my own family; *that*, and that only, is a determined line, and Lord Sheffield is the first to approve his exclusion. He has a strong assurance of success, and some hopes of a speedy decision. How suddenly your friend General Pierson disappeared! You thought him happy. What is happiness! My dear Madam, ever yours.

N° CXLVIII.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

Paris, ce 21 Avril, 1781.

C'EST assez bouder, Monsieur; je me livre enfin entièrement au plaisir de vous écrire et de vous lire, sans examiner si l'auteur de ce bel ouvrage, si le génie sublime, qui a parcouru les annales de l'univers, et qui semble n'avoir extrait de toutes les contrées du monde que les parfums les plus purs, afin de les porter jusqu'à nos sens; si, dis-je, cet homme étonnant, méconnoit, comme tous les autres amants de la gloire, les charmes et les devoirs de l'amitié, si son imagination vive et ardente est unie à un caractère froid et paresseux, si ses goûts

* Mrs. Holroyd of Bath.

varient avec les objets, et s'il ne prend la couleur que des rayons qu'il décompose; enfin si ses affections sont pour lui comme ses livres qui l'interressent et l'amusent pendant qu'il les lit et qui feront place à d'autres, bientôt remplacés à leur tour; je ne veux rien sçavoir de tout cela, et cependant je m'écrie encore quelquefois, Quoi! même en amitié! Mais ne croyez pas que vous en soyez quitte à présent pour être abandonné à votre indifférence. Quoique je sois concentrée dans les objets de mon plus tendre attachement, la sensibilité que j'ai reçue de la nature suffit à d'autres liens. Mon ame n'existe que quand elle aime et cherche encore au dehors de son centre de nouveaux moyens d'exister; je veux donc que vous me rendiez les sentimens que vous m'avez promis; je les ai comptés dans le calcul de mon bonheur, et, je vous connois, vous aurez de l'affection pour moi quand vous me reverrez, et vous ne serez pénétré de vos torts que quand vous n'en aurez plus. Je vous rends grace d'avoir rempli un intervalle immense dans l'histoire et d'avoir jetté sur le cahos ce pont qui lie le monde ancien au monde moderne. Vous avez mis dans ma tête cinq cens ans de belles et d'agréables idées, et pour moi, dont la vie douce et réfléchie ressemble plutôt à une suite de pensées qu'à une suite de jouissances, le passé est une sorte d'existence, et c'est presque cinq cens ans que vous avez ajoutés à mon être. Je crois, je vous l'avoue, que vos derniers quatre volumes sont encore supérieurs au premier. Vous avez traité avec beaucoup de sagesse les vaines disputes du quatrième siècle. Je vous ai lu sans scandale. Car qu'im-

qu'importe la pensée de l'auteur si ses écrits n'en font naître aucune qu'on puisse blamer ou craindre? Vous avez bien compté dans ces deux chapitres sur la ravissante magie de votre stile, et vous avez eu raison. Mais avec quelle perfection vous possédez aussi notre langue! votre lettre si charmante par les pensées et les expressions est un modèle pour nous; et comment remettez vous en d'autres mains le soin de vous traduire? Comment ne courrez vous pas une carrière, que vous aurez ouverte le premier, et où personne après vous ne pourra entrer? Quel éclat vous avez jetté sur tous ces tems obscures et barbares! Je crois que l'age d'or eût été moins favorable à votre éloquence. De quelques brillantes couleurs que vous nous ayez peint le site de Constantinople, on voit que vous vous plaisez d'avantage à reproduire les merveilles de l'art que celles de la nature; et les miracles ne sont pas aussi bien avec vous que les efforts miraculeux du génie des hommes; tant il est vrai qu'un auteur ne peut s'empêcher d'être personnel.

J'ai lu avec tant d'intérêt les détails qui vous touchent, que je crois pouvoir hasarder de vous dire un mot de moi. Ma fille est fort aimable sans être belle. M. Necker me voit toujours avec la même complaisance, et semble ne jouir de sa réputation qu'autant que j'en suis l'interprète; et ma vie future n'aura jamais aucun rapport avec celle d'Athénais. Il m'est doux cependant que mon ombre se présente quelquefois à vous quand vous écrivez, dussiez vous évoquer les démons pour la faire paroître; il faut bien qu'il s'en rencontre

quelques uns parmi tous les génies qui ont versé leur influence sur votre ouvrage. Mais parlons un peu de la gravure qui m'a fait un si grand plaisir; pourquoi donc tant gronder l'original? Oh pourquoi? L'ingrat ne va-t-il pas donner à M. Deyverdun le tems qu'il m'avoit promis? Vous ne devez pas retourner dans un pays où vous chercherez en vain les douces illusions de votre jeunesse. Je laisse quelquefois errer ma pensée sur ces lieux jadis si chers, et depuis qu'ils ne sont plus habités pour moi, je ne les vois que comme les hochets de mon enfance. Vous êtes dans les bras de la gloire, venez chez un peuple qui l'adore; ou si le tems vous paroît moins favorable, ne perdons pas de vuë cette paisible retraite où nous devons nous réunir, pour y attendre entre l'étude et l'amitié la douce fin d'un assez beau jour; vivez dans votre patrie, ou vivez auprès de nous. Tout le monde parle ici de vous, Monsieur, avec dépit ou avec éloge; votre silence a fait vos torts, dès que vous parlerez ils seront réparés. J'ai flatté toutes les personnes à qui j'ai donné des marques de votre souvenir. Le chevalier est en Amérique, et ce n'est pas la première fois que je vois mourir ainsi mes amis tout vivans, soit par leur faute soit par celle des circonstances—mais je me tais; vous voyez qu'il est bien difficile de pardonner quand il est impossible de se venger.

M. Necker se joint à moi pour vous présenter ses hommages et l'éternelle assurance de notre attachement et de notre admiration.

C. N.

N°

N° CXLIX.

Dr. WILLIAM ROBERTSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, College of Edinburgh, May 12th, 1781.

I AM ashamed of having deferred so long to thank you for the agreeable presents of your two new volumes; but just as I had finished the first reading of them, I was taken ill, and continued, for two or three weeks, nervous, deaf, and languid. I have now recovered as much spirit as to tell you, with what perfect satisfaction I have not only perused, but studied, this part of your work. I knew enough of your talents and industry to expect a great deal, but you have gone far beyond my expectations. I can recollect no historical work from which I ever received so much instruction; and, when I consider in what a barren field you had to glean and pick up materials, I am truly astonished at the connected and interesting story you have formed. I like the style of these volumes better than that of the first; there is the same beauty, richness, and perspicuity of language, with less of that quaintness, into which your admiration of Tacitus sometimes seduced you. I am highly pleased with the reign of Julian. I was a little afraid that *you* might lean with some partiality towards him; but even bigots, I should think, must allow, that you have delineated his most singular character with a more masterly hand than ever touched it before. You set me a reading his works, with which I was very slenderly acquainted;

ed; and I am much struck with the felicity where-with you have described that odd infusion of Heathen fanaticism and philosophical coxcombry, which mingled with the great qualities of a hero, and a genius. Your chapter concerning the pastoral nations is admirable; and, though I hold myself to be a tolerably good general historian, a great part of it was new to me. As soon as I have leisure, I purpose to trace you to your sources of information; and I have no doubt of finding you as exact there, as I have found you in other passages where I have made a scrutiny. It was always my idea that an historian should feel himself a witness giving evidence upon oath. I am glad to perceive by your minute scrupulosity, that your notions are the same. The last chapter in your work is the only one with which I am not entirely satisfied. I imagine you rather anticipate, in describing the jurisprudence and institutions of the Franks; and should think that the account of private war, ordeals, chivalry, &c. would have come in more in its place about the age of Charlemagne, or later: but with respect to this, and some other petty criticisms, I will have an opportunity of talking fully to you soon, as I propose setting out for London on Monday. I have, indeed, many things to say to you; and, as my stay in London is to be very short, I shall hope to find your door (at which I will be very often) always open to me. I cannot conclude without approving of the caution with which the new volumes are written; I hope it will exempt you from the illiberal abuse the first volume

volume drew upon you. I ever am, yours, faithfully and affectionately,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

N° CL.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Lady* SHEFFIELD, *at* Sheffield-place.

Bentinck-street, Friday Evening, 10 o'clock, 1781.

OH, oh! I have given you the slip; saved thirty miles, by proceeding this day directly from Eartham to town, and am now *comfortably* seated in my library, in *my own* easy chair, and before *my* own fire; a style which you understand, though it is unintelligible to your Lord. The town is empty; but I am surrounded with a thousand old acquaintance of all ages and characters, who are ready to answer a thousand questions which I am impatient to ask. I shall not easily be tired of their company; yet I still remember, and will honourably execute, my promise of visiting you at Brighton about the middle of next month. I have seen nobody, nor learned any thing, in four hours of a town life; but I can inform you, that Lady * * * * is now the declared Mistress of Prince Henry of Prussia, whom she encountered at Spa; and that the Emperor has invited the amiable couple to pass the winter at Vienna: fine encouragement for married women who behave themselves properly. I spent a very pleasant day in the little paradise of Eartham, and the hermit expressed a desire (no vulgar

vulgar compliment) to see and to know Lord S. Adieu. I cordially embrace, &c.

N° CLI.

Sir WILLIAM JONES *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, Lamb's-buildings, June 30th, 1781.

I HAVE more than once sought, without having been so fortunate as to obtain, a proper opportunity of thanking you very sincerely for the elegant compliment which you pay me, in a work abounding in elegance of all kinds.

My *Seven Arabian Poets* will see the light before next winter, and be proud to wait upon you in their English dress. Their wild productions will, I flatter myself, be thought interesting, and not venerable merely on account of their antiquity.

In the mean while, let me request you to honour me with accepting a copy of a Law Tract, which is not yet published: the subject is so generally important that I make no apology for sending you a professional work.

You must pardon my inveterate hatred of C. Octavianus, basely surnamed Augustus. I feel myself unable to forgive the death of Cicero, which, if he did not promote, he might have prevented. Besides, even Mecænas knew the cruelty of his disposition, and ventured to reproach him with it. In short, I have not *Christian* charity for him.

With regard to Asiatic letters, a necessary attention to my profession will compel me wholly and eternally

eternally to abandon them, *unless* Lord North (to whom I am already under no small obligation) should think me worthy to concur in the *improved* administration of justice in Bengal, and should appoint me to supply the vacancy on the India Bench. Were that appointment to take place this year, I should probably travel, for speed, through part of Egypt and Arabia, and should be able, in my way, to procure many Eastern tracts of literature and jurisprudence. I might become a good *Mahomedan* lawyer before I reached Calcutta, and, in my vacations, should find leisure to explain, in my native language, whatever the Arabs, Persians, and Turks, have written on science, history, and the fine arts.

My happiness by no means depends on obtaining this appointment, as I am in easy circumstances without my profession, and have flattering prospects in it; but if the present summer and the ensuing autumn elapse without my receiving any answer, favourable or unfavourable, I shall be forced to consider that silence as a polite refusal, and, having given sincere thanks for past favours, shall entirely drop all thoughts of *Asia*, and, "deep as ever plummet sounded, shall drown my *Persian* books." If my politics have given offence, it would be manly in ministers to tell me so. I shall never be *personally* hostile to them, nor enlist under party banners of any colour; but I will never resign my opinions for *interest*, though I would cheerfully abandon them on *conviction*. My reason, such as it is, can only be controlled by better

ter reason, to which I am ever open. As to my freedom of thought, speech, and action, I shall ever say what Charles XII. wrote under the map of Riga, "*Dieu me l'a donnée; le diable ne me l'ôtera pas.*" But the fair answer to this objection is, that my system is purely speculative, and has no relation to my seat on the bench in India, where I should hardly think of instructing the Gentoos in the maxims of the Athenians. I believe I should not have troubled you with this letter, if I did not fear that your attendance in Parliament might deprive me of the pleasure of meeting you at the Club next Tuesday; and I shall go to Oxford a few days after. At all times, and in all places, I shall ever be, with undissembled regard, dear Sir, your much obliged and faithful servant,

W. JONES.

N° CLII.

Lord HARDWICKE *to Mr.* GIBBON.

SIR, Wimple, September 20th, 1781.

As I have perused your History of the Decline, &c. with the greatest pleasure and instruction, I cannot help wishing that, as health and leisure permit, you would gratify your numerous readers and admirers, by continuing it, at least till the irruption of the Arabs after Mahomet. From that period the History of the East is not very interesting, and often disgusting. I particularly wish to see the reigns of Justin, Justinian, and I think Justin the Second,

Second, written by so masterly a hand. There are striking facts and remarkable characters in all those reigns, which have not yet met with an able and sagacious *Historian*. You seemed (as well as I recollect) to think the anecdotes of Procopius spurious; there are strange anecdotes in them, and of a very different cast from his History. Can it be traced up when they first came to light?

Excuse this short interruption from much better employments or amusements; and believe me, Sir, with the greatest regard, your most obedient humble servant,

HARDWICKE.

P. S. It has occurred to me, that a map of the progress and native seat of the northern hives would greatly elucidate and explain that part of your History. It may be done in a second edition.

N° CLIII.

Dr. ROBERTSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, College of Edinburgh, Nov. 6th, 1781.

SOON after my return I had a long conversation with our friend Mr. Smith, in which I stated to him every particular you mentioned to me, with respect to the propriety of going on with your great work. I was happy to find, that his opinion coincided perfectly with that which I had ventured to give you. His decisions, you know, are both prompt and vigorous: and he would not allow that you ought to hesitate a moment in your choice. He

He promised to write his sentiments to you very fully. But as he may have neglected to do this, for it is not willingly he puts pen to paper, I thought it might be agreeable to you to know his opinion, though I imagine you could hardly entertain any doubt concerning it. I hope you have brought such a stock of health and spirits from Brighthelmstone, that you are set seriously at your desk, and that in two winters or so, you will display the crescent of Mahomet on the dome of St. Sophia. I met t'other day, in a work addressed to yourself, a sensible passage from F. Paul, which perfectly removes one of your chief difficulties, as to the barrenness of some parts of your period. Hayley's Essay on History, p. 133. By the bye, who is this Mr. Hayley? His poetry has more merit than that of most of his contemporaries; but his Whiggism is so bigotted, and his Christianity so fierce, that he almost disgusts one with two very good things.

I have got quite well long ago, and am perfectly free from deafness; but I cannot yet place myself in any class but that of the *multa et præclara minantes*. Be so kind as to remember me to Lord Loughborough and Mr. Craufurd, and believe me to be, with most sincere respect and attachment, yours very faithfully,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

N° CLIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, Brighthelmstone, Nov. 2d, 1781.

I RETURNED to this place with Lord and Lady Sheffield, with the design of passing two or three weeks in a situation which had so highly delighted me. But how vain are all sublunary hopes! I had forgot that there is some difference between the sunshine of August and the cold fogs (though we have uncommon good weather) of November. Instead of my beautiful sea-shore, I am confined to a dark lodging in the middle of the town; for the place is still full, and our time is now spent in the dull imitation of a London life. To complete my misfortunes, Lord Sheffield was hastily ordered to Canterbury and Deal, to suppress some disturbances, and I was left almost alone with my Lady, in the servile state of a married man. But he returns to-day, and I hope to be seated in my own library by the middle of next week. However, you will not be sorry to hear that I have refreshed myself by a very *idle* summer, and indeed a much idler and more pleasant winter than the House of Commons will ever allow me to enjoy again. I had almost forgot Mr. Hayley; ungratefully enough, since I really passed a very simple, but entertaining day with him. His place, though small, is elegant as his mind, which I value much more highly. Mrs. **** wrote a melancholy story of an American mother, a friend of her

friend, who in a short time had lost three sons; one killed by the savages, one run mad from the fright at that accident, and the third taken at sea, now in England, a prisoner in Forton hospital. For *him* something might perhaps be done. Your humanity will prompt you to obtain from Mrs. * * * * a more accurate account of names, dates, and circumstances; but you will prudently suppress my request, lest I should raise hopes which it may not be in my power to gratify. Lady Sheffield begs to send her kindest compliments to you. I am, dear Madam, ever yours.

N° CLV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, July 3d, 1782.

I HOPE you have not had a moment's uneasiness about the delay of my Midsummer letter. Whatever may happen, you may rest fully secure, that the materials of it shall always be *found*. But on this occasion I have missed four or five posts; postponing, as usual, from morning to the evening bell, which now rings, till it has occurred to me, that it might not be amiss to inclose the two essential lines, if I only added that the influenza has been known to me only by the report of others. Lord Rockingham is at last dead; a good man, whatever he might be a minister: his successor is not yet named, and divisions in the Cabinet are suspected. If Lord Shelburne should be the man, as I think he will, the friends of his predecessor will quarrel with

with him before Christmas. At all events, I foresee much tumult and strong opposition, from which I should be very glad to extricate myself, by quitting the House of Commons with honour. Whatever you may hear, I believe there is not the least intention of dissolving Parliament, which would indeed be a rash and dangerous measure. I hope you like Mr. Hayley's poem; he rises with his subject, and since Pope's death, I am satisfied that England has not seen so happy a mixture of strong sense and flowing numbers. Are you not delighted with his address to his mother? I understand that she was in plain prose every thing that he speaks her in verse. This summer I shall stay in town, and work at my trade, till I make some holidays for my Bath excursion. Lady Sheffield is at Brighton, and he is under tents, like the wild Arabs; so that my country-house is shut up. I am, dear Madam, ever yours.

N° CLVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD, *Camp*, Coxheath.

Bentinck-street, 1782.

I SYMPATHISE with your fatigues; yet Alexander, Hannibal, &c. have suffered hardships almost equal to yours. At such a moment it is disagreeable (besides laziness) to write, because every hour teems with a new lie. As yet, however, only Charles has formally resigned; but Lord John,*

* Lord John Cavendish.

Burke, Keppel, Lord Althorpe, &c. certainly follow; your Lord Lieutenant* stays. In short, three months of prosperity have dissolved a phalanx, which had stood ten years adversity. Next Tuesday, Fox will give his reasons, and possibly be encountered by Pitt, the new Secretary, or Chancellor,† at three-and-twenty. The day will be rare and curious, and, if I were a light dragoon, I would take a gallop on purpose to Westminster. Adieu. I hear the bell. How could I write before I knew where you dwelt?

N° CLVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD, *Camp*, Coxheath.

September 29th, 1782.

I SHOULD like to hear sometimes, whether you survive the scenes of action and danger in which a dragoon is continually involved. What a difference between the life of a dragoon and that of a philosopher! and I will freely own that I (the philosopher) am much better satisfied with my own independent and tranquil situation, in which I have always something to do, without ever being obliged to do any thing. The Hampton Court villa has answered my expectation, and proved no small addition to my comforts; so that I am resolved next summer to hire, borrow, or steal, either the same, or something of the same kind. Every morning I walk a mile or more before breakfast, read and write

* The Duke of Richmond. † Chancellor of the Exchequer.

quantum

quantum sufficit, mount my chaise and visit in the neighbourhood, accept some invitations, and escape others, use the Lucans as my daily bread, dine pleasantly at home, or sociably abroad, reserve for study an hour or two in the evening, lie in town regularly once a week, &c. &c. &c. I have announced to Mrs. Gibbon my new arrangements; the certainty that October will be fine, and my increasing doubts whether I shall be able to reach Bath before Christmas. Do you intend (but how can you intend any thing?) to pass the winter under canvass? Perhaps under the veil of Hampton Court I may lurk ten days or a fortnight at Sheffield, if the enraged Lady does not shut the doors against me. The Warden* passed through on his way to Dover. He is not so fat, and more cheerful than ever. I had not any private conversation with him; but he clearly holds the balance, unless he lets it drop out of his hand. The Pandæmonium (as I understand) does not meet till the twenty-sixth of November. Town is more a desert than I ever knew it. I arrived yesterday, dined at Sir Joshúa's with a tolerable party; the chaise is now at the door; I dine at Richmond, lie at Hampton, &c. Adieu.

N° CLVIII.

The Same to the Same.

Bentinck-street, October 14th, 1782.

On the approach of winter, my paper house at Hampton becomes less comfortable; my visits to

* Lord North.

Bentinck-street grow longer and more frequent, and the end of next week will restore me to the town, with a lively wish, however, to repeat the same, or a similar experiment, next summer. I admire the assurance with which you propose a month's residence a Sheffield, when you are not sure of being allowed three days. Here it is currently reported, that camps will not separate till Lord Howe's *return* from Gibraltar, and as yet we have no news of his arrival. Perhaps indeed you may have more intimate correspondence with your old friend Lord Shelburne, and already know the hour of your deliverance. I should like to be informed. As Lady Sheffield has entirely forgotten me, I shall have the pleasure of forming a new acquaintance. I have often thought of writing, but it is now too late to repent.

I am at a loss what to say or think about our parliamentary state. A certain late Secretary of Ireland reckons the House of Commons thus: Minister one hundred and forty, Lord North one hundred and twenty, Fox ninety, the rest unknown, or uncertain. The second, by self or agents, talks too much of absence, neutrality, moderation. I still think he will discard the game.

I am not in such a fury with the letter of American independence; but I think it seems ill-timed and useless; and I am much entertained with the metaphysical disputes between Government and Secession about the meaning of it. Lord Loughborough will be in town Sunday seven-night. I long to see him and Co. I think he will take a very

decided

decided part. If he could throw aside his gown, he would make a noble leader. The East India news are excellent. The French gone to the Mauritius, Heyder desirous of peace, the Nizam and Mahrattas our friends, and seventy lacks of rupees in the Bengal treasury, while we were voting the recal of Hastings. Adieu. Write soon.

N° CLIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Lord* SHEFFIELD.

1782.

I HAVE designed writing every post. The air of London is admirable; my complaints have vanished, and the gout still respects me. Lord Loughborough, with whom I passed an entire day, is very well satisfied with his Irish expedition, and found the barbarous people very kind to him. The castle is strong, but the volunteers are formidable. London is dead, and all intelligence so totally extinct, that the loss of an army would be a favourable incident. We have not even the advantage of shipwrecks, which must soon, with the society of you and Gerard Hamilton, become the only pleasures of Brighton. My Lady is precious, and deserves to shine in London, when she regains her palace. The workmen are slow, but I hear that the Minister talks of hiring another house after Christmas.* Adieu, till Monday seven-night.

* Lord North, while his house was repairing, inhabited Lord Sheffield's in Downing-street.

N° CLX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Lord* SHEFFIELD.

January 17th, 1783.

As I arrived about seven o'clock on Wednesday last, we were some time in town in mutual ignorance. Unlucky enough; yet our loss will be speedily repaired. Your reason for not writing is worthy of an Irish Baron: you thought Sarah might be at Bath, because you directed letters to her at Clifton near Bristol; where indeed I saw her in a delightful situation, swept by the winter winds, and scorched by the summer sun. A nobler reason for your silence would be the care of the public papers, to record your steps, words, and actions. I was pleased with your Coventry oration: a panegyric on * * * * is a subject entirely new, and which no orator before yourself would have dared to undertake. You have acted with prudence and dignity in casting away the military yoke. This next summer you will sit down (if you can sit) in the long lost character of a country gentleman.

For my own part, my late journey has only confirmed me in the opinion, that Number Seven in Bentinck-street is the best house in the world. I find that peace and war alternately, and daily, take their turns of conversation, and this (Friday) is the pacific day. Next week we shall probably hear some questions on that head very strongly asked, and very foolishly answered, &c. Give me a line by return of post, and probably I may visit Downing-street on Monday evening: late, however, as I am engaged to dinner and cards. Adieu.

N°

N° CLXI.

[Although Dr. Priestley may not be justified for publishing the following Letters, yet as he thought fit to print them with a volume of sermons soon after Mr. Gibbon's death, it will not be improper to insert them in this collection.]

Mr. GIBBON *to Dr.* PRIESTLEY.

SIR, January 23d, 1783.

As a mark of your esteem, I should have accepted with pleasure your History of the Corruptions of Christianity. You have been careful to inform me, that it is intended, not as a gift, but as a challenge, and such a challenge you must permit me to decline. At the same time you glory in outstripping the zeal of the Mufti and the Lama, it may be proper to declare, that I should equally refuse the defiance of those venerable divines. Once, and once only, the just defence of my own veracity provoked me to descend into the amphitheatre; but as long as you attack opinions which I have never maintained, or maintain principles which I have never denied, you may safely exult in my silence and your own victory. The difference between us, (on the credibility of miracles,) which you chuse to suppose, and wish to argue, is a trite and ancient topic of controversy, and, from the opinion which you entertain of yourself and of me, it does not appear probable that our dispute would either edify or enlighten the Public.

That Public will decide to whom the *invidious* name

name of Unbeliever more justly belongs; to the Historian, who, without interposing his own sentiments, has delivered a simple narrative of authentic facts, or to the disputant who proudly rejects all natural proofs of the immortality of the soul, overthrows (by circumscribing) the inspiration of the evangelists and apostles, and condemns the religion of every Christian nation, as a fable less innocent, but not less absurd, than Mahomet's journey to the third Heaven.

And now, Sir, since you assume a right to determine the objects of my past and future studies, give me leave to convey to your ear the almost unanimous, and not offensive wish, of the philosophic world:—that you would confine your talents and industry to those sciences in which real and useful improvements *can* be made. Remember the end of your predecessor Servetus, not of his life, (the Calvins of our days are restrained from the use of the same fiery arguments,) but, I mean, the end of his reputation. His theological writings are lost in oblivion; and if his book on the Trinity be still preserved, it is only because it contains the first rudiments of the discovery of the circulation of the blood.

I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant.

N° CLXII.

Dr. PRIESTLEY *to Mr.* GIBBON.

SIR, Birmingham, 3d February, 1783.

IT would have been impertinent in me, especially considering the object of my *History*, to have sent

sent you a copy of it as a mark of my *esteem* or *friendship*. What I meant was to act the part of a fair and open *adversary*, and I am truly sorry that you decline the discussion I proposed: for though you are of a different opinion, I do not think that either of us could be better employed; and, should the Mufti and the Lama, whose challenge, you say, you would also decline, become parties in the business, I should rejoice the more. I do not well know what you can mean by intimating, that I am a greater Unbeliever than yourself; that I attack opinions which you never maintained, and maintain principles which you never denied. If you mean to assert, that you are a believer in Christianity, and meant to recommend it, I must say, that your mode of writing has been very ill adapted to gain your purpose. If there be any certain method of discovering a man's real object, yours has been to discredit Christianity in fact, while in words you represent yourself as a friend to it: a conduct which I scruple not to call highly unworthy and mean; an insult on the common sense of the Christian world; as a method of screening you from the notice of the law, (which is as hostile to me as it is to you,) you must know that it could avail you nothing; and, though that mode of writing might be deemed ingenious and witty in the first inventor of it, it has been too often repeated to deserve that appellation now.

According to your own rule of conduct, this charge ought to provoke you to descend into the amphitheatre once more, as much as the accusation of

of Mr. Davis: for it is a call upon you to defend, not your *principles* only, but also your *honour*. For what can reflect greater dishonour on a man, than to say one thing and mean another? You have certainly been very far from confining yourself, as you pretend, to a simple narrative of authentic facts, without interposing your own sentiments. I hold no opinions, obnoxious as they are, that I am not ready both to *avow* in the most explicit manner, and also to defend with any person of competent judgment and ability. Had I not considered you in this light, and also as fairly open, by the strain of your writings, to such a challenge, I should not have called upon you as I have done. The Public will form its own judgment both of that and of your silence on the occasion; and finally decide between you, the *humble historian*, and me, the *proud disputant*.

As to my *reputation*, for which you are so very obligingly concerned, give me leave to observe, that, as far as it is an object with any person, and a thing to be enjoyed by himself, it must depend upon his particular notions and feelings.—Now, odd as it will appear to you, the esteem of a very few rational Christian friends (though I know that it will ensure me the detestation of the greater part of the present nominally Christian world that happen to hear me) gives me more real satisfaction, than the applause of what you call the philosophic world. I admire Servetus, by whose example you wish me to take warning, more for his courage in dying for the cause of important truth,

than

than I should have done if, besides the certain discovery of the circulation of the blood, he had made any other the most celebrated discovery in philosophy.

However, I do not see what my philosophical friends (of whom I have many, and whom I think I value as I ought) have to do with my metaphysical or theological writings. They may, if they please, consider them as my particular whims or amusements, and accordingly neglect them. They have, in fact, interfered very little with my application to philosophy, since I have had the means of doing it. I was never more busy, or more successfully so, in my philosophical pursuits, than during the time that I have been employed about the History of the Corruptions of Christianity. I am at this very time *totus in illis*, as my friends know; and as the Public will know in due time, which with me is never long; and if you had thought proper to enter into the discussion I proposed, it would not have made me neglect my laboratory, or omit a single experiment that I should otherwise have made.

I am, Sir,
Your very humble servant,
J. PRIESTLEY.

N° CLXIII.

Mr. GIBBON *to Dr.* PRIESTLEY.

SIR, Bentinck-street, February 6th, 1783.

As I do not pretend to judge of the sentiments or intentions of another, I shall not inquire how far

far you are inclined to suffer, or inflict, martyrdom. It only becomes me to say, that the style and temper of your last letter have satisfied me of the propriety of declining all further correspondence, whether public or private, with such an adversary. I am, Sir, your humble servant.

N° CLXIV.

Dr. PRIESTLEY *to Mr.* GIBBON.

SIR, Birmingham, February 10th, 1783.

I NEITHER requested nor wished to have any *private correspondence* with you. All that my MS. card required, was a simple acknowledgment of the receipt of the copy of my work: You chose, however, to give me a specimen of your temper and feelings; and also, what I thought to be an opening to a further call upon you for a justification of yourself *in public*. Of this I was willing to take advantage; and, at the same time, to satisfy you, that my philosophical pursuits, for which, whether in earnest or not, you were pleased to express some concern, would not be interrupted in consequence of it.

As this correspondence, from the origin and nature of it, cannot be deemed *confidential*, I may, especially if I resume my observations on your conduct as an Historian, give the Public an opportunity of judging of the propriety of my answer to your first extraordinary letter, and also to this last truly *enigmatical* one; to interpret which requires much more sagacity, than to discover your real

real intentions with respect to Christianity, though you might think you had carefully concealed them from all human inspection.

Wishing to hear from you just as little as you please in private, and just as much as you please in public, I am, Sir, your humble servant.

N° CLXV.

Mr. GIBBON *to Dr.* PRIESTLEY.

February 22d, 1783.

IF Dr. Priestley consults his friends, he will probably learn, that a single copy of a paper, addressed under a seal to a single person, and not relative to any public or official business, must always be considered as *private* correspondence; which a man of honour is not at liberty to print without the consent of the writer. That consent in the present instance, Mr. Gibbon thinks proper to with-hold; and, as he desires to escape all further altercation, he shall not trouble Dr. Priestley or himself with explaining the motives of his refusal.

N° CLXVI.

Dr. PRIESTLEY *to Mr.* GIBBON.

Birmingham, 25th February, 1783.

DR. Priestley is as unwilling to be guilty of any real impropriety as Mr. Gibbon can wish him to be: but, as the correspondence between them relates not to any *private*, but only to a *public matter*, he

he apprehends that it may, according to Mr. Gibbon's own distinction, at the pleasure of either of the parties be laid before the public; who, in fact, are interested to know, at least, the result of it. Dr. Priestley's conduct will always be open to animadversion, that of Mr. Gibbon, or of any other person. His appeal is to men of honour, and even men of the world; and he desires no favour.

Dr. Priestley has sent a single copy of the correspondence to a friend in London, with leave to shew it to any other common friends, but with a prohibition to take any other copy: but between this and *printing* there is no difference, except in *mode* and *extent*. In the eye of the law and of reason both are equally publications; and has Mr. Gibbon never thought himself at liberty to shew a copy of a letter to a third person?

Mr. Gibbon may easily escape all further altercation by discontinuing this mutually disagreeable correspondence, by leaving Dr. Priestley to act as his own discretion or indiscretion may dictate; and for this, himself only, and not Mr. Gibbon, is responsible.

N° CLXVII.

Mr. GIBBON *to Lord* THURLOW.

MY LORD,

WITHOUT presuming to inquire into the state of public measures, which must be secret in order to be successful, I cannot but observe and congratulate, with the rest of my countrymen, the fair prospect

prospect of peace, or at least of negociation, which seems to be opening upon us.

I find it generally understood that the principal conduct of this important event will be entrusted to a minister whose eminent abilities have been long tried and distinguished. But a scene of business so various and extensive must afford several collateral and subordinate lines of negociation. If in any of these I should be thought qualified for public trust, I am ready to devote my time and my best industry to the service of my country, and shall think myself happy if I can discharge, in any degree, my debt of gratitude to His Majesty's Government.

Your Lordship's experience of mankind has undoubtedly taught you to distrust and dislike ostentatious professions; yet I may affirm with the confidence of truth that if I consulted only my private interest and inclination, I should not be lightly tempted to interrupt the tranquillity and leisure, which I now enjoy, and in which I am never busy and never idle.

The grateful recollection of your Lordship's indulgence on a former occasion has strongly solicited me to make this offer of my services. I should deem it no vulgar honour if they could ever deserve the approbation of a wise and intrepid statesman, who, in a divided country, has commanded the esteem and applause of the most hostile parties.

I am, with great respect, my Lord, &c.

E. GIBBON.

The Lord Chancellor.

N° CLXVIII.

Lord THURLOW *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR,

I SHALL certainly avail myself of your permission not to tender your services to the Minister, but whenever an occasion sufficiently considerable shall offer to suggest a name which possesses so many titles to the public confidence. And in that strange and distant scene (of foreign politics) it is almost the only suggestion I can make with perfect confidence.

I have the honour to be, &c.

THURLOW.

N° CLXIX.

M. GIBBON *à M.* DEYVERDUN, à Lausanne.

A Londres, ce 20 Mai, 1783.

QUE j'aime la douce et parfaite confiance de nos sentimens réciproques! Nous nous aimons dans l'éloignement et le silence, et il nous suffit à l'un et à l'autre, de savoir de tems en tems des nouvelles de la santé et du bonheur de son ami. Aujourd'hui j'ai besoin de vous écrire; je commence sans excuses et sans reproches, comme si nous allions reprendre la conversation familière du jour précédent. Si je proposois de faire un *compte rendu* de mes études, de mes occupations, de mes plaisirs, de mes nouvelles liaisons, de ma politique toujours muette, mais un peu plus rapprochée des grands

grands événemens, je multiplierois mes *in quarto*, et je ne sais pas encore votre avis sur ceux que je vous ai déjà envoyés. Dans cette histoire moderne, il seroit toujours question de la décadence des empires; et autant que j'en puis juger sur mes réminiscences et sur le rapport de l'ami Bugnon, vous aimez aussi peu la puissance de l'Angleterre que celle des Romains. Notre chute, cependant, a été plus douce. Après une guerre sans succès, et une paix assez peu glorieuse, il nous reste de quoi vivre contens et heureux; et lorsque je me suis dépouillé du rôle de Membre du Parlement, pour redevenir homme, philosophe, et historien, nous pourrions bien nous trouver d'accord sur la plupart des scènes étonnantes qui viennent de se passer devant nos yeux, et qui fourniront une riche matière aux plus habiles de mes successeurs.

Bornons nous à cette heure à un objet moins illustre sans doute, mais plus intéressant pour tous les deux, et c'est beaucoup que le même objet puisse intéresser deux mortels qui ne se sont pas vûs, qui à peine se sont écrit depuis—oui, ma foi—depuis huit ans. Ma plume, très paresseuse au commencement, ou plutôt avant le commencement, marche assez vîte, lorsqu'elle s'est une fois mise en train; mais une raison qui m'empêcheroit de lui donner carrière, c'est l'espérance de pouvoir bientôt me servir avec vous d'un instrument encore plus commode, la langue. Que l'homme, l'homme anglois, l'homme Gibbon, est un sot animal! Je l'espère, je le désire, je le puis, mais je ne sais pas si je le veux, encore moins si j'exécuterai cette

volonté. Voici mon histoire, autant qu'elle pourra vous éclairer, qu'elle pourra m'éclairer moi-même, sur mes véritables intentions, qui me paroissent très obscures, et très équivoques; et vous aurez la bonté de m'apprendre quelle sera ma conduite future. Il vous souvient, Seigneur, que mon grand-père a fait sa fortune, que mon père l'a mangée avec un peu trop d'appétit, et que je jouis actuellement du fruit, ou plutôt du reste de leurs travaux. Vous n'avez pas oublié que je suis entré au Parlement sans patriotisme, sans ambition, et que toutes mes vues se bornoient à la place commode et honnête d'un *Lord of Trade*. Cette place, je l'ai obtenue enfin; je l'ai possédée trois ans, depuis 1779 jusqu' à 1782, et le produit net, qui se montoit à sept cens cinquante livres sterling, augmentoit mon revenu au niveau de mes besoins et de mes désirs. Mais au printems de l'année précédente, l'orage a grondé sur nos têtes: Milord North a été renversé, votre serviteur chassé, et le *Board* même, dont j'étois membre, aboli et cassé pour toujours, par la réformation de M. Burke, avec beaucoup d'autres places de l'Etat, et de la maison du Roi. Pour mon malheur, je suis toujours resté Membre de la Chambre basse: à la fin du dernier Parlement (en 1780) M. Eliot à retiré sa nomination; mais la faveur de Milord North a facilité ma rentrée, et la reconnoissance m'imposoit le devoir de faire valoir, pour son service, les droits que je tenois en partie de lui. Cet hyver nous avons combattu sous les étendards réunis (vous savez notre

notre histoire) de Milord North et de M. Fox; nous avons triomphé de Milord Shelburne et de la paix. Avec beaucoup d'esprit, et des qualités très respectables, Milord North n'a plus ni le titre, ni le crédit de premier ministre; des collègues plus actifs lui enlèvent les morceaux les plus friands, qui sont aussitôt dévorés par la voracité de leurs créatures; nos malheurs et nos réformes ont diminué le nombre des graces; par orgueil ou par paresse, je sollicite aussi mal, et si je parviens enfin, ce sera peut-être à la veille d'une nouvelle révolution, qui me fera perdre dans un instant, ce qui m'aura coûté tant de soins et de recherches. Si je ne consultois que mon cœur et ma raison, je romperois sur le champ cette indigne chaine de la dépendance; je quitterois le Parlement, Londres, l'Angleterre; je chercherois sous un ciel plus doux, dans un pays plus tranquille, le repos, la liberté, l'aisance, et une société éclairée, et aimable. Je coulerois quelques années de ma vie sans espérance, et sans crainte, j'acheverois mon histoire, et je ne rentrerois dans ma patrie qu'en homme libre, riche, et respectable par sa position, aussi bien que par son caractère. Mes amis, et surtout Milord Sheffield, ne veulent pas me permettre d'être heureux suivant mon goût et mes lumières. Leur prudence exige que je fasse tous mes efforts, pour obtenir un emploi très sûr à la vérité, qui me donneroit mille guinées de rente, mais qui m'enleveroit cinq jours par semaine. Je me prête à leur zèle, et je leur ai promis de ne partir qu'en automne, après avoir

consacré l'été à cette dernière tentative. Le succès, cependant, est très incertain, et je ne sais si je le désire de bonne foi.

Si je parviens à me voir exilé, mon choix ne sera pas douteux. Lausanne a eu mes prémices ; elle me sera toujours chère par le doux souvenir de ma jeunesse. Au bout de trente ans, je me rappelle les polissons qui sont aujourd'hui juges, les petites filles de la société du Printems, qui sont devenues grand-mères. Votre pays est charmant, et, malgré le dégoût de Jean-Jacques, les mœurs, et l'esprit de ses habitans, me paroissent très assortis aux bords du lac Léman. Mais un trésor que je ne trouverois qu'à Lausanne, c'est un ami qui me convient également par les sentimens et les idées, avec qui je n'ai jamais connu un instant d'ennui, de sécheresse, ou de réserve. Autrefois dans nos libres épanchemens, nous avons cent fois fait le projet de vivre ensemble, et cent fois nous avons épluché tous les détails du roman, avec une chaleur qui nous étonnoit nous mêmes. A présent il demeure, ou plutôt vous demeurez, (car je me lasse de ce ton étudié,) dans une maison charmante et commode ; je vois d'ici mon appartement, nos salles communes, notre table, et nos promenades ; mais ce mariage ne vaut rien, s'il ne convient pas également aux deux époux, et je sens combien des circonstances locales, des goûts nouveaux, de nouvelles liaisons, peuvent s'opposer aux desseins, qui nous ont paru les plus agréables dans le lointain. Pour fixer mes idées, et pour nous épargner des regrets, il faut me dévoiler avec la franchise dont

je

je vous ai donné l'exemple, le tableau extérieur et intérieur de George Deyverdun. Mon amour est trop délicat, pour supporter l'indifférence et les égards, et je rougirois d'un bonheur dont je serois redevable, non à l'inclination, mais à la fidélité de mon ami. Pour m'armer contre les malheurs possibles, hélas! peut-être trop vraisemblables, j'ai essayé de me détacher de la pensée de ce projet favori, et de me représenter à Lausanne votre bon voisin, sans être précisément votre commensal. Si j'y étois réduit, je ne voudrois pas tenir maison, autant par raison d'économie, que pour éviter l'ennui de manger seul. D'un autre côté, une pension ouverte, fut-elle montée sur l'ancien pied de celle de Mesery, ne conviendroit plus à mon age, ni à mon caractère. Passerois-je ma vie au milieu d'une foule de jeunes Anglois échappés du collège, moi qui aimerois Lausanne cent fois davantage, si j'y pouvois être le seul de ma nation? Il me faudroit donc une maison commode et riante, un état au dessus de la bourgeoisie, un mari instruit, une femme qui ne ressembleroit pas à Madame Pavilliard, et l'assurance d'y être reçu comme le fils unique, ou plutôt comme le frère de la famille. Pour nous arranger sans gêne, je meublerai très volontiers un joli appartement sous le même toit, où dans le voisinage, et puisque le ménage le plus foible laisse encore de l'étoffe pour une forte pension, je ne serois pas obligé de chicaner sur les conditions pécuniaires. Si je me vois déchu de cette dernière espérance, je renoncerois en soupirant à ma seconde patrie, pour chercher un nouvel asyle,

non pas à Genève, triste séjour du travail et de la discorde, mais aux bords du lac de Neufchatel, parmi les bons Savoyards de Chamberry, ou sous le beau climat des Provinces Méridionales de la France. Je finis brusquement, parceque j'ai mille choses à vous dire. Je pense que nous nous ressemblons pour la correspondance. Pour le bavardage savant ou même amical, je suis de tous les hommes le plus paresseux, mais dès qu'il s'agit d'un objet réel, d'un service essentiel, le premier courier emporte toujours ma réponse. A la fin d'un mois, je commencerai à compter les semaines, les jours, les heures. Ne me les faites pas compter trop long tems. Vale.

N° CLXX.

M. Deyverdun *à M.* Gibbon.

Strasbourg, le 10 Juin, 1783.

Je ne saurois vous exprimer, Monsieur et cher ami, la variété, et la vivacité, des sensations que m'a fait éprouver votre lettre. Tout cela a fini par un fond de plaisir et d'espérance qui resteront dans mon cœur, jusqu'à ce que vous les en chassiez.

Un rapport singulier de circonstances contribue à me faire espérer que nous sommes destinés à vivre quelque tems agréablement ensemble. Je ne suis pas dégoûté d'une ambition que je ne connus jamais; mais par d'autres circonstances, je me trouve dans la même situation d'embarras et d'incertitude où vous êtes aussi à cette époque. Il y a un an que votre lettre, mon cher ami, m'auroit fait

fait plaisir sans doute, mais en ce moment, elle m'en fait bien davantage; elle vient en quelque façon à mon secours.

Depuis mon retour d'Italie, ne pouvant me déterminer à vendre ma maison, m'ennuyant d'y être seul (car je suis comme vous, Monsieur, et je déteste de manger sans compagnie) ne voulant pas louer à des étrangers, j'ai pris le parti de m'arranger assez joliment au premier étage, et de donner le second à une famille de mes amis, qui me nourrit, et que je loge. Cet arrangement a paru pendant long tems contribuer au bonheur des deux parties. Mais tout est transitoire sur cette terre. Ma maison sera vuide, selon toute apparence, sur la fin de l'été, et je me vois d'avance tout aussi embarrassé et incertain, que je l'étois il y a quelques années, ne sachant quelle nouvelle société choisir, et assez disposé à vendre enfin cette possession qui m'a causé bien des plaisirs et bien des peines. Ma maison est donc à votre disposition pour cet automne, et vous y arriveriez comme un Dieu dans une machine qui finit l'embroglio. Voilà quant à moi; parlons de vous maintenant avec la même sincérité.

Un mot de préambule. Quelque intéressé que je sois à votre résolution, convaincu qu'il faut aimer ses amis pour eux-mêmes, sentant d'ailleurs combien il seroit affreux pour moi de vous voir des regrets, je vous donne ici ma parole d'honneur, que mon intérêt n'influe en rien sur ce que je vais écrire, et que je ne dirai pas un mot que je ne vous disse, si l'hermite de la grotte étoit un autre que moi.

moi. Vos amis anglais vous aiment pour eux-mêmes; je ne veux moi que votre bonheur. Rappellez-vous, mon cher ami, que je vis avec peine votre entrée dans le Parlement, et je crois n'avoir été que trop bon prophète; je suis sûr que cette carrière vous a fait éprouver plus de privations que de jouissances, beaucoup plus de peines que de plaisirs; j'ai cru toujours, depuis que je vous ai connu, que vous étiez destiné à vivre heureux par les plaisirs du cabinet et de la société, que tout autre marché étoit un écart de la route du bonheur, et que ce n'étoit que les qualités réunies d'homme de lettres, et d'homme aimable de société, qui pouvoient vous procurer gloire, honneur, plaisirs, et une suite continuelle de jouissances. Au bout de quelques tours dans votre salle, vous sentirez parfaitement que j'avois bien vu, et que l'événement a justifié mes idées. Lorsque j'ai appris que vous étiez *Lord of Trade*, j'en ai été faché; quand j'ai su que vous aviez perdu cette place, je m'en suis réjouis pour vous; quand on m'a annoncé que Milord North étoit remonté sur sa bête,* j'ai cru vous voir très mal à votre aise, en croupe derrière lui, et je m'en suis affligé pour vous. Je suis donc charmé, mon cher ami, de vous savoir à pied, et je vous conseille très sincèrement de rester dans cette position, et bien loin de solliciter la place en question, de la refuser, si elle vous étoit offerte. Mille guinées vous dédommageront-elles de cinq jours

* Alluding to Lord North's having become a part of administration by accepting the office of Secretary of State.

pris

pris de la semaine? Je suppose, ce que cependant j'ai peine à croire, que vous me disiez que oui: et la variété et l'inconstance continuelle de votre ministère, vous promettent-elles d'en jouir long tems constamment, et n'est-il pas plus désagréable, mon cher Monsieur, de n'avoir plus 1000 livres sterl. de rente, qu'il n'a été agréable d'en jouir? D'ailleurs ne pourrez-vous pas toujours rentrer dans la carrière, si l'ambition ou l'envie de servir la patrie, vous reprennent; ne rentrerez-vous pas avec plus d'honneur, lorsque vos rentes étant augmentées naturellement, vous serez libre et indépendant?

En faisant cette retraite en Suisse, outre la beauté du pays, et les agrémens de la société, vous acquererez deux biens que vous avez perdus, la liberté et la richesse. Vous ne serez d'ailleurs point inutile; vos ouvrages continueront à nous éclairer, et indépendamment de vos talens, l'honnête homme, le galant homme, n'est jamais inutile.

Il me reste à vous présenter le tableau que vous trouveriez. Vous aimiez ma maison et mon jardin, c'est bien autre chose à présent. Au premier étage qui donne sur la descente d'Ouchy, je me suis arrangé un appartement qui me suffit, j'ai une chambre de domestique, deux sallons, et deux cabinets. J'ai au plein pied de la terrasse, deux autres sallons dont l'un sert en été de salle à manger, et l'autre de sallon de compagnie. J'ai fait un nouvel appartement de trois pièces dans le vuide entre la maison et la remise, en sorte que j'ai à vous offrir tout le grand appartement, qui consiste actuellement en onze pièces, tant grandes que petites, tournées au

Levant

Levant et au Midi, meublées sans magnificence déplacée, mais avec une sorte d'élégance dont j'espère que vous seriez satisfait. La terrasse a peu changé; mais elle est terminée par un grand cabinet mieux proportionné que le précédent, garnie tout du long, de caisses d'orangers, &c. La treille, qui ne vous est pas indifférente, a embelli, prospéré, et règne presqu'entièrement jusqu'au bout; parvenu à ce bout, vous trouverez un petit chemin qui vous conduira à une chaumière placée dans un coin; et de ce coin, en suivant le long d'une autre route à l'anglaise, le mur d'un manège. Vous trouverez au bout, un châlet avec écurie, vacherie, petite porte, petit cabinet, petite bibliothèque, et une galerie de bois doré, d'où l'on voit tout ce qui sort et entre en ville par la porte du Chêne, et tout ce qui se passe dans ce Faubourg. J'ai acquis la vigne au-dessous du jardin; j'en ai arraché tout ce qui étoit devant la maison; j'en ai fait un tapis vert arrosé par l'eau du jet d'eau; et j'ai fait tout autour de ce petit parc, une promenade très variée par les différens points de vue et les objets même intérieurs, tantôt jardin potager, tantot parterre, tantôt vigne, tantôt prés, puis châlet, chaumière, petite montagne; bref, les étrangers viennent le voir et l'admirent, et malgré la description pompeuse que je vous en fais, vous en serez content.

N. B. J'ai planté une quantité d'excellens arbres fruitiers.

Venons à moi; vous comprenez bien que j'ai vieilli, excepté pour la sensibilité; je suis à la mode,

mode, mes nerfs sont attaqués; je suis plus mélancolique, mais je n'ai pas plus d'humeur; vous ne souffrirez de mes maux que tout au plus négativement. Ensemble, et séparés par nos logemens, nous jouirons vis-à-vis l'un de l'autre, de la plus grande liberté. Nous prendrons une gouvernante douce et entendue, plutôt par commodité que par nécessité; car je me chargerois sans crainte de la surintendance. J'ai fait un ménage de quatre, pendant quelque tems; j'ai fait le mien, et j'ai remarqué que cela marchoit tout seul, quand c'étoit une fois en train. Les petites gens qui n'ont que ce mérite, font grand bruit pour rien. Mon jardin nous fournira avec abondance de bons fruits et d'excellens légumes. Pour le reste de la table et de la dépense domestique, je ne demanderois pas mieux que de vous recevoir chez moi, comme vous m'avez reçu chez vous; mais nos situations sont différentes à cet égard; cependant si vous étiez plus ruiné, je vous l'offrirois sans doute, et je devrois le faire; mais avec les rentes que vous aviez, quand j'étois chez vous, en les supposant même diminuées, vous vivrez très agréablement à Lausanne. Enfin à cet égard nous nous arrangerons, comme il vous sera le plus agréable, et en proportion de nos revenus. Toujours serez vous ainsi, à ce que j'espère, plus décemment et plus comfortablement, que vous ne seriez par tout ailleurs au même prix.

Quant à la société, quoique infiniment agréable, je commence ce chapitre par vous dire que j'éviterois de vous y inviter, si vous étiez entièrement désœuvré;

désœuvré; les jours sont longs alors, et laissent bien du vuide; mais homme de lettres, comme vous êtes, je ne connois point de société qui vous convienne mieux. Nous aurons autour de nous un cercle, comme il seroit impossible d'en trouver ailleurs dans un aussi petit espace. Madame de Corcelles, Mademoiselle Sulens, et M. de Montolieu, (Madame est morte,) Messrs. Polier et leurs femmes, Madame de Severy, et M. et Madame de Nassau, Mademoiselle de Chandieu, Madame de St. Cierge, et M. avec leurs deux filles jolies et aimables, Mesdames de Crousaz, Polier, de Charrières, &c, font un fonds de bonne compagnie dont on ne se lasse point, et dont M. de Servan est si content qu'il regrette toujours d'être obligé de retourner dans ses terres, et ne respire que pour s'établir tout à fait à Lausanne. Il passa tout l'hyver de 1782 avec nous, et il fut, on ne peut plus, agréable. Vous trouverez les mœurs changées en bien, et plus conformes à nos ages, et à nos caractères; peu de grandes assemblées, de grands repas, mais beaucoup de petits soupers, de petites assemblées, où l'on fait ce qu'on veut, où l'on cause, lit, &c. et dont on écarte avec soin les facheux de toute espèce. Il y a le Dimanche une société, où tout ce qu'il y a d'un peu distingué en étrangères et étrangers, est invité. Cela fait des assemblées de 40 à 50 personnes, où l'on voit ce qu'on ne voit guères le reste de la semaine, et ces espèces de *rout* font quelquefois plaisir. Nous sommes fort dégoûtés des étrangers, surtout des jeunes gens, et nous les écartons avec soin de nos petits comités,

à moins

à moins qu'ils n'ayent du mérite, ou quelques talens. A cet égard un de nos petits travers, c'est l'engouement; mais vous en profiterez, mon cher Monsieur, comme Edward Gibbon, et comme mon ami; vous serez d'abord l'homme à la mode, et je vois d'ici que vous soutiendrez fort bien ce rôle, sans vous en fâcher, dût on un peu vous surfaire. *Je sens que tu me flattes, mais tu me fais plaisir*, est peut-être le meilleur vers de Destouches. Voilà donc l'hyver; l'étude le matin, quelques conversations, quand vous serez fatigué, avec quelque homme de lettres, ou amateur, où du moins qui aura vu quelque chose; à l'heure qu'il vous plaira un dîner, point de fermier général, mais l'honnête épicurien, avec un ou deux amis quand vous voudrez; puis quelques visites, une soirée, souvent un souper. Quant à l'été, vu votre manière d'aimer la campagne, on diroit que ma remise a été faite pour vous; pendant que vous vous y promènerez en sénateur, je serai souvent en bon paysan Suisse, devant mon châlet, ou dans ma chaumière; puis nous nous rencontrerons tout à coup, et tâcherons de nous remettre au niveau l'un de l'autre. Nous fermerons nos portes à l'ordinaire, excepté aux étrangers qui passent leur chemin; mais quand nous voudrons, nous y aurons tous ceux que nous aimerons à y voir; car on ne demande pas mieux que d'y venir se réjouir. J'ai eu, un beau jour d'Avril ce printems, un déjeûner, qui m'a coûté quelques Louis, où il y avoit plus de 40 personnes, je ne sais combien de petites tables, une bonne musique au milieu du verger, et une quantité

tité de jeunes et jolies personnes dansant des branles, et formant des chiffres en cadence; j'ai vu bien des fêtes, j'en ai peu vu de plus jolies. Quand mon parc vous ennuyera, nous aurons, ou nous louerons ensemble (et ce sera ainsi un plaisir peu cher) un cabriolet léger, avec deux chevaux gentils, et nous irons visiter nos amis dispersés dans les campagnes, qui nous recevront à bras ouverts. Vous en serez content de nos campagnes; toujours en proportion vous comprenez, et vous trouverez en général un heureux changement pour les agrémens de la société, et une sorte de recherche simple, mais élégante. Les bergères du *Printems*, excepté Madame de Vanberg, ne sont sans doute plus présentables, mais il y en a d'autres assez gentilles, et quoiqu'elles ne soyent pas en bien grand nombre, il y en aura toujours assez pour vous, mon cher Monsieur. Peu à peu mon imagination m'a emporté, et mon style s'égaye, comme cela nous arrivoit quelquefois dans nos châteaux en Espagne. Il est bien tems de finir cet article, résumons nous plus sérieusement.

Si vous exécutez le plan que vous avez imaginé, j'aimerois même à dire que vous embrassez, surtout d'après ce que vous marquez vous même, *Si je ne consultois que mon cœur et ma raison, je romperois sur le champ cette indigne chaine*, &c. Eh! que voulez-vous consulter, si ce n'est votre cœur et votre raison? Si, dis-je, vous exécutez ce plan, vous retrouverez une liberté et une indépendance, que vous n'auriez jamais dû perdre, et dont vous méritez

ritez de jouir, une aisance qui ne vous coûtera qu'un voyage de quelques jours, une tranquillité que vous ne pouvez avoir à Londres, et enfin un ami qui n'a peut-être pas été un jour sans penser à vous, et qui malgré ses défauts, ses foiblesses et son infériorité, est encore un des compagnons qui vous convient le mieux.

Il me reste à vous apprendre pourquoi je vous réponds si tard: vous savez déjà actuellement que ce n'est pas manque d'amitié et de zèle pour la chose; mais votre lettre m'a été renvoyée de Lausanne ici, à Strasbourg, et je n'ai passé qu'une poste sans y répondre, ce qui n'est pas trop, vous l'avouerez, pour un pareil bavardage. Je suis parti de Lausanne la veille de Pâques pour venir voir un M. Bourcard de Basle, fort de mes amis; il est ici auprès du Comte de Cagliostro, pour profiter de ses remèdes. Vous aurez entendu parler peut-être de cet homme extraordinaire à tous égards. Comme j'ai été assez malade tout l'hyver, je profite aussi de ses remèdes; mais comme le tems du séjour du Comte ici n'est rien moins que sûr, le mieux sera que vous m'écriviez *à M. D.^e chez M. Bourcard du Kirshgarten, à Basle.*

Vous comprenez combien à tous égards, il est nécessaire m'écrire sans perte de tems, dès que vous aurez pris une résolution. Adieu, mon cher ami.

N° CLXXI.

M. GIBBON *à M.* DEYVERDUN.

JE reçois votre lettre du 10 Juin, le 21 de ce mois. Aujourd'hui Mardi 24, je mets la main à la plume (comme dit M. Fréron) pour y répondre, quoique ma missive ne puisse partir par arrangement des postes, que Vendredi prochain, 27 du courant. O merveille de la grace efficace! Elle n'agit pas moins puissamment sur vous, et moyennant le secours toujours prêt, et toujours prompt de nos couriers, un mois nous suffit pour la demande et la réponse. Je remercie mille fois le génie de l'amitié, qui m'a poussé, après mille efforts inutiles, à vous écrire enfin au moment le plus critique et le plus favorable. Jamais démarche n'a répondu si parfaitement à tous mes vœux et à toutes mes espérances. Je comptois sans doute sur la durée et la vérité de vos sentimens; mais j'ignorois (telle est la foiblesse humaine) jusqu'à quel point ils avoient pu être attiédis par le tems et l'éloignement; et je savois encore moins l'état actuel de votre santé, de votre fortune et de vos liaisons, qui auroient pu opposer tant d'obstacles à notre réunion. Vous m'écrivez, vous m'aimez toujours; vous désirez avec zèle, avec ardeur, de réaliser nos anciens projets; vous le pouvez, vous le voulez; vous m'offrez dès l'automne votre maison, et quelle terrasse! votre société, et quelle société! L'arrangement nous convient à tous les deux; je retrouve à la fois le compagnon de ma jeunesse, un

sage

sage conseiller, et un peintre qui fait représenter et exagérer même les objets les plus rians. Ces exagérations me font pour le moins autant de plaisir que la simple vérité. Si votre portrait étoit tout à fait ressemblant, ces agrémens n'existeroient que hors de nous mêmes, et j'aime encore mieux les trouver dans la vivacité de votre cœur et de votre imagination. Ce n'est pas que je ne reconnoisse un grand fond de vérité dans le tableau de Lausanne; je connois le lieu de la scène, je me transporte en idée sur notre terrasse, je vois ces côteaux, ce lac, ces montagnes, ouvrages favoris de la nature, et je conçois sans peine les embellissemens que votre goût s'est plu y ajouter. Je me rappelle depuis vingt ou trente ans les mœurs, l'esprit, l'aisance de la société, et je comprends que ce véritable ton de la bonne compagnie se perpétue, et s'épure de père en fils, ou plutôt de mère en fille; car il m'a toujours paru qu'à Lausanne, aussi bien qu'en France, les femmes sont très supérieures aux hommes. Dans un pareil séjour, je craindrois la dissipation bien plus que l'ennui, et le tourbillon de Lausanne étonneroit un philosophe accoutumé depuis tant d'années à la tranquillité de Londres. Vous êtes trop instruit pour regarder ce propos, comme une mauvaise plaisanterie; c'est dans les détroits qu'on est entrainé par la rapidité des courans: il n'y en a point en pleine mer. Dès qu'on ne recherche plus les plaisirs bruyans, et qu'on s'affranchit volontiers des devoirs pénibles, la liberté d'un simple particulier se fortifie par l'immensité de la ville. Quant à moi, l'application à mon grand ouvrage, l'habitude,

et la récompense du travail, m'ont rendu plus studieux, plus sédentaire, plus ami de la retraite. La Chambre des Communes et les grands dîners exigent beaucoup de tems; et la tempérance d'un repas anglois vous permet de goûter de cinq ou six vins différens, et vous ordonne de boire une bouteille de claret après le dessert. Mais enfin je ne soupe jamais, je me couche de bonne heure, je reçois peu de visites, les matinées sont longues, les étés sont libres, et dès que je ferme ma porte, je suis oublié du monde entier. Dans une société plus bornée et plus amicale, les démarches sont publiques, les droits sont réciproques, l'on dîne de bonne heure, on se goûte trop pour ne pas passer l'après-midi ensemble; on soupe, on veille, et les plaisirs de la soirée ne laissent pas de déranger le repos de la nuit, et le travail du lendemain. Quel est cependant le résultat de ces plaintes? c'est seulement que la mariée est trop belle, et que j'ose me servir de l'excuse honnête de la santé et du privilège d'un homme de lettres; il ne tiendra qu'à moi de modérer un peu l'excès de mes jouissances. Pour cet engouement que vous m'annoncez, et qui a toujours été le défaut des peuples les plus spirituels, je l'ai déjà éprouvé sur un plus grand théâtre. Il y a six ans que l'ami de Madame Necker fut reçu à Paris, comme celui de George Deyverdun pourroit l'être à Lausanne. Je ne connois rien de plus flatteur que cet accueil favorable d'un public poli et éclairé. Mais cette faveur, si douce pour l'étranger, n'est-elle pas un peu dangereuse pour l'habitant exposé à voir flétrir ses lauriers, par la faute

ou

ou par l'inconstance de ses juges? Non; on se soutient toujours, peut être pas précisément, au même point d'élévation. A l'abri de trois gros volumes in-quarto en langue étrangère, encore ce qui n'est pas un petit avantage, je conserverai toujours la réputation littéraire, et cette réputation donnera du relief aux qualités sociales, si l'on trouve l'historien sans travers, sans affectation et sans prétentions. Je serai donc charmé et content de votre société, et j'aurois pu dire en deux mots, ce qui j'ai bavardé en deux pages; mais il y a tant de plaisir à bavarder avec un ami! car enfin je possède à Lausanne un véritable ami; et les simples connoissances remplaceront sans beaucoup de peine, tout ce qui s'appelle liaison, et même amitié, dans ce vaste désert de Londres. Mais au moment où j'écris, je vois de tous côtés une foule d'objets dont la perte sera bien plus difficile à réparer. Vous connoissiez ma bibliothèque; mais je suis en état de vous rendre le propos de votre maison *c'est bien autre chose à cette heure;* formée peu à peu, mais avec beaucoup de soin et de dépense, elle peut se nommer aujourd'hui un beau cabinet de particulier. Non content de remplir à rangs redoublés la meilleure pièce qui lui étoit destinée, elle s'est débordée dans la chambre sur la rue, dans votre ancienne chambre à coucher, dans la mienne, dans tous les recoins de la maison de *Bentinck-street*, et jusques dans une chaumière que je me suis donnée à *Hampton Court*.

J'ai mille courtisans rangés autour de moi:
Ma retraite est mon Louvre, et j'y commande en roi.

Le fonds est de la meilleure compagnie Grecque, Latine, Italienne, Françoise, et Angloise, et les autres les moins chers à l'homme de goût, des ecclésiastiques, des Byzantins, des Orientaux, sont les plus nécessaires à l'historien de la Décadence et de la Chute, &c. Vous ne sentez que trop bien le désagrément de laisser, et l'impossibilité de transporter cinq ou six milles volumes, d'autant plus que le ciel n'a pas voulu faire de la Suisse un pays maritime. Cependant mon zèle pour la réussite de nos projets communs, me fait imaginer que ces obstacles pourront s'applanir, et que je puis adoucir ou supporter ces privations douloureuses. Les bons auteurs classiques, la bibliothèque des nations, se retrouvent dans tous les pays. Lausanne n'est pas dépourvu de livres, ni de politesse, et j'ai dans l'esprit qu'on pourroit acquérir pour un certain tems, quelque bibliothèque d'un vieillard ou d'un mineur, dont la famille ne voudroit pas se défaire entièrement. Quant aux outils de mon travail, nous commencerons par examiner l'état de nos richesses; après quoi il faudroit faire un petit calcul du prix, du poids et de la rareté de chaque ouvrage, pour juger de ce qu'il seroit nécessaire de transporter de Londres, et de ce qu'on acheteroit plus commodément en Suisse; à l'égard de ces frais, on devroit les envisager comme les avances d'une manufacture transplantée en pays étranger, et dont on espère retirer dans la suite un profit raisonnable. Malheureusement votre bibliothèque publique, en y ajoutant même celle de M. de Bochat, est assez piteuse; mais celles de Berne et de Basle sont très nombreuses,

nombreuses, et je compterois assez sur la bonhommie Helvétique, pour espérer que, moyennant des recommendations et des cautions, il me seroit permis d'en tirer les livres dont j'aurois essentiellement besoin. Vous êtes très bien placé pour prendre les informations, et pour fixer les démarches convenables; mais vous voyez du moins combien je me retourne de tous les côtés, pour esquiver la difficulté la plus formidable.

Venons à présent à des objets moins relevés, mais très importans à l'existence et au bien-être de l'animal, le logement, les domestiques, et la table. Pour mon appartement particulier, une chambre à coucher, avec un grand cabinet et une antichambre, auroient suffi à tous mes besoins; mais si vous pouvez vous en passer, je me promenerai avec plaisir dans l'immensité de vos onze pièces, qui s'accommoderont sans doute aux heures et aux saisons différentes. L'article des domestiques renferme une assez forte difficulté, sur laquelle je dois vous consulter. Vous connoissez, et vous estimez Caplin mon valet de chambre, maître d'hotel, &c. qui a été nourri dans notre maison, et qui comptoit y finir ses jours. Depuis votre départ, ses talens et ses vertus se sont développés de plus en plus, et je le considère bien moins sur le pied d'un domestique, que sur celui d'un ami. Malheureusement il ne sait que l'Anglois, et jamais il n'apprendra de langue étrangère. Il m'accompagna, il y a six ans, dans mon voyage à Paris, mais il rapporta fidèlement à Londres toute l'ignorance, et tous les préjugés d'un bon patriote. A Lausanne il me coûteroit beaucoup, et à l'excep-

tion du service personnel, il ne nous seroit que d'une très petite utilité. Cependant je supporterois volontiers cette dépense, mais je suis très persuadé que, si son attachement le portoit à me suivre, il s'ennuyeroit à mourir dans un pays où tout lui seroit étranger et désagréable. Il faudroit donc me détacher d'un homme dont je connois le zèle, la fidélité, rompre tout d'un coup de petites habitudes qui sont liées avec le bien-être journalier et momentané, et se résoudre à lui substituer un visage nouveau, peut-être un mauvais sujet, toujours quelque aventurier Suisse pris sur le pavé de Londres. Vous rappellez-vous un certain George Suisse qui a fait autrefois avec moi, le voyage de France et d'Italie? Je le crois marié et établi à Lausanne; s'il vit encore, si vous pouvez l'engager à se rendre ici, pour me ramener en Suisse, la compagnie d'un bon et ancien serviteur ne laisseroit pas d'adoucir la chute, et il resteroit peut-être auprès de moi, jusqu'à ce que nous eussions choisi un jeune homme du pays, adroit, modeste et bien élevé, à qui je ferois un parti avantageux. Les autres domestiques, gouvernantes, laquais, cuisinière, &c. se prennent et se renvoyent sans difficulté. Un article bien plus important, c'est notre table, car enfin nous ne sommes pas assez hermites, pour nous contenter des légumes et des fruits de votre jardin, tout excellens qu'ils sont; mais je n'ai presque rien à ajouter à l'honnêteté de vos propos, qui me donnent beaucoup plus de plaisir que de surprise. Si je me trouvois sans fortune, au lieu de rougir des bienfaits de l'amitié, j'accepterois vos offres aussi simplement

que

que vous les faites. Mais nous ne sommes pas réduits à ce point, et vous comprenez assez qu'une déconfiture angloise laisse encore une fortune fort décente au Pays de Vaud, et pour vous dire quelque chose de plus précis, je dépenserois sans peine et sans inconvénient cinq ou six cens Louis. Vous connoissez le résultat aussi bien que les détails d'un ménage; en supposant une petite table de deux philosophes Epicuriens, quatre, cinq, ou six domestiques, des amis assez souvent, des repas assez rarement, beaucoup de sensualité, et peu de luxe, à combien estimez-vous en gros la dépense d'un mois et d'une année? Le partage que vous avez déjà fait, me paroît des plus raisonnables; vous me logez, et je vous nourris. A votre calcul, j'ajouterois mon entretien personnel, habits, plaisirs, gages de domestiques, &c. et je verrois d'une manière assez nette, l'ensemble de mon petit établissement.

Après avoir essuyé tant de détails minutieux, le cher lecteur s'imagine sans doute que la résolution de me fixer pendant quelque tems aux bords du Lac Léman, est parfaitement décidée. Hélas! rien n'est moins vrai; mais je me suis livré au charme délicieux de compter, de fonder, de palper ce bonheur, dont je sens tout le prix, qui est à ma portée, et auquel j'aurai peut-être la bêtise de renoncer. Vous avez raison de croire, mais vous ignorez jusqu'à quel point vous l'avez, que ma carrière politique a été plus semée d'épines que de roses. Eh! qeul objet, quel mortel, pourroit me consoler de l'ennui des affaires, et de la honte de la dépendance? *La gloire?* Comme homme

homme de lettres, j'en jouis, comme orateur je ne l'aurai jamais, et le nom des simples soldats est oublié dans les victoires aussi bien que dans les défaites. *Le devoir ?* Dans ces combats à l'aveugle, où les chefs ne cherchent que leur avantage particulier, il y a toujours à parier que les subalternes feront plus de mal que de bien. *L'attachement personnel ?* Les ministres sont rarement dignes de l'inspirer; jusqu'à présent Lord North n'a pas eu à se plaindre de moi, et si je me retire du Parlement, il lui sera très aisé d'y substituer un autre muet, tout aussi affidé que son ancien serviteur. Je suis intimément convaincu, et par la raison, et par le sentiment, qu'il n'y a point de parti, qui me convienne aussi bien que de vivre avec vous, et auprès de vous à Lausanne; et si je parviens à la place *(Commissioner of the Excise or Customs)* où je vise, il y aura toutes les semaines cinq longues matinées, qui m'avertiront de la folie de mon choix. Vous vous trompez à la vérité à l'égard de l'instabilité de ces emplois; ils sont presque les seuls qui ne ressentent jamais des révolutions du ministère. Cependant si cette place s'offroit bientôt, je n'aurois pas le bon sens et le courage de la refuser. Quels autres conseillers veux-je prendre, sinon mon cœur et ma raison? Il en est de puissans et toujours écoutés: les égards, la mauvaise honte, tous mes amis, ou soi-disant tels, s'écrieront que je suis un homme perdu, ruiné, un fou qui se dérobe à ses protecteurs, un misanthrope qui s'exile au bout du monde, et puis les exagérations sur tout ce qui seroit fait en ma faveur, si surement, si promptement,

si

si libéralement. Milord Sheffield opinera à me faire interdire et enfermer; mes deux tantes et ma belle mère se plaindront que je les quitte pour jamais, &c. Et l'embarras de prendre mon bonnet de nuit, comme disoit le sage Fontenelle, lorsqu'il n'étoit question que de se coucher, combien de bonnets de nuit ne me faudra-t-il pas prendre, et les prendre tout seul? car tout le monde, amis, parens, domestiques, s'opposera à ma fuite. Voilà à la vérité des obstacles assez peu redoutables, et en les décrivant, je sens qu'ils s'affoiblissent dans mon esprit. Grace à ce long bavardage vous connoissez mon intérieur, comme moi même, c'est à dire assez mal; mais cette incertitude, très amicale pour moi, seroit très facheuse pour vous. Votre réponse me parviendra vers la fin de Juillet, et huit jours après, je vous promets une réplique nette et décisive: *je pars* ou *je reste*. Si je pars, ce sera au milieu de Septembre; je mangerai les raisins de votre treille les premiers jours d'Octobre, et vous aurez encore le tems de me charger de vos commissions. Ne me dites plus, *Monsieur, et très cher ami;* le premier est froid, le second est superflu.

N° CLXXII.

M. DEYVERDUN *à M.* GIBBON.

ME voilà un peu embarrassé actuellement; je ne dois vous appeller ni Monsieur, ni ami. Eh bien! vous saurez qu'étant parti Samedi de Strasbourg, pendant que je venois ici, votre seconde lettre alloit là, et qu'ainsi je reçus votre troisième,

Dimanche,

Dimanche, et votre seconde, hier. La mention que vous y faisiez du Suisse George, dont je n'ai pu rien trouver dans la première, m'a fait comprendre qu'il y en avoit une seconde, et j'ai cru devoir attendre un courier, la troisième n'exigeant pas de réponse.

Pour votre parole, permettez que je vous en dispense encore, et même jusqu'au dernier jour, je sens bien qu'un procédé contraire vous conviendroit; mais certes il ne me convient pas du tout. Ceci, comme vous le dites, est une espèce de mariage, et pensez vous que malgré les engagemens les plus solemnels, je n'eusse pas reconduit chez elle, du pied des autels, la femme la plus aimable qui m'eut temoigné des regrets? Jamais je ne me consolerois, si je vous voyois mécontent dans la suite, et dans le cas de me faire des reproches. C'est à vous à faire, si vous croyez nécessaire, des démarches de votre côté, qui fortifient votre résolution; pour moi, je n'en ferai point d'essentielles, jusqu'à ce que j'aye reçu encore une lettre de vous. Après ce petit préambule, parlons toujours comme si l'affaire étoit décidée, et repassons votre lettre. Tout ce que vous dites des grandes et petites villes, est très vrai, et votre comparaison des détroits et de la pleine mer, est on ne peut pas plus juste et agréable; mais enfin, *comme on fait son lit, on se couche*, disoit Sancho Pancha d'agréable mémoire, et qui peut mieux faire son lit à sa guise qu'un étranger, qui, n'ayant ni devoirs d'état ni de sang à remplir, peut vivre entièrement isolé, sans que personne y puisse trouver à redire? Moi même, bourgeois et citoyen

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de la ville, je suis presqu'entièrement libre. L'été, par exemple, je déteste de m'enfermer le soir dans des chambres chaudes, pour faire une partie. Eh bien! on m'a persécuté un peu la première année; à présent on me laisse en repos. Il y aura sans doute quelque changement dans votre manière de vivre: mais il me semble qu'on se fait aisément à cela. Les dîners, surtout en femmes, sont très rares; les soupers peu grands; on reste plutôt pour être ensemble, que pour manger, et plusieurs personnes ne s'asseyent point. Je crois, tout compté et rabattu, que vouz aurez encore plus de tems pour le cabinet qu'à Londres; on sort peu le matin, et quand nos amis communs viendront chez moi, et vous demanderont, je leur dirai; " ce n'est pas un oisif comme vous autres, il travaille dans son cabinet," et ils se tairont respectueusement.

Pour les bibliothèques publiques, votre idée ne pourroit, je pense, se réaliser pour un lecteur ou même un écrivain ordinaire, mais un homme qui joue un rôle dans la république des lettres, un homme aimé et considéré, trouvera, je m'imagine, bien des facilités; d'ailleurs, j'ai de bons amis à Berne, et je prendrai ici des informations.

Passons à la table. Si j'étois à Lausanne, cet article seroit plus sûr, je pourrois revoir mes papiers, consulter; j'ai une chienne de mémoire. A vue de pays cela pourra aller de 20 à 30 Louis par mois, plus ou moins, vous sentez, suivant la friandise, et le plus ou moins de convives. Marquez moi dans votre première combien vous coûte le vôtre.

Je sens fort bien tous les bonnets de nuit: point de

de grands changemens sans embarras, même sans regrets; vous en aurez quelquefois sans doute: par exemple, si votre salle à manger, votre salle de compagnie, sont plus riantes, vous perdrez pour le vase de la bibliothèque. Pour ce qui est des représentations, des discours au moins inutiles, il me semble que le mieux seroit de masquer vos grandes opérations, de ne parler que d'une course, d'une visite chez moi, de six mois ou plus ou moins. Vous feriez bien, je pense, d'aller chez mon ami Louis Teissier; c'est un brave et honnête homme, qui m'est attaché, qui aime notre pays; il vous donnera tout plein de bons conseils avec zèle, et vous gardera le secret.

Vous aurez quelquefois à votre table un poëte; —oui, Monsieur, un poëte:—nous en avons un enfin. Procurez vous un volume 8vo. *Poësies Helvétiennes, imprimées l'année passée chez Mouser, à Lausanne.* Vouz trouverez entr'autres dans l'épitre au jardinier de la grotte, votre ami et votre parc. Toute la prose est de votre très humble serviteur, qui désire qu'elle trouve grace devant vous.

Le Comte de Cagliostro a fait un séjour à Londres. On ne sait qui il est, d'où il est, d'où il tire son argent; il exerce *gratis* ses talens pour la médecine; il a fait des cures admirables; mais c'est d'ailleurs le composé le plus étrange. J'ai cessé de prendre ses remèdes qui m'échauffoient—l'homme d'ailleurs me gâtoit le médecin. Je suis revenu à Basle avec mon ami. Adieu; récrivez moi le plutôt possible.

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N° CLXXIII.

M. GIBBON *à M.* DEYVERDUN.

Hampton Court, ce 1 Juillet, 1783.

APRÈS avoir pris ma résolution, l'honneur, et ce qui vaut encore mieux l'amitié, me défendent de vous laisser un moment dans l'incertitude. JE PARS. Je vous en donne ma parole, et comme je suis bien aise de me fortifier d'un nouveau lien, je vous prie très sérieusement de ne pas m'en dispenser. Ma possession, sans doute, ne vaut pas celle de Julie; mais vous serez plus inéxorable que St. Preux. Je ne sens plus qu'une vive impatience pour notre réunion. Mais le mois d'Octobre est encore loin; 92 jours, et nous aurons tout le tems de prendre, et de nous donner des éclaircissemens dont nous avons besoin. Après un mûr examen, je renonce au voyage de George Suisse, qui me paroît incertain, cher et difficile. Après tout mon valet de chambre et ma bibliothèque sont les deux articles les plus embarrassans. Si je ne retenois pas ma plume, je remplirois sans peine la feuille; mais il ne faut pas passer du silence à un babil intarissable. Seulement si je connois le Comte de Cagliostro, cet homme extraordinaire, &c. Savez vous le Latin? oui, sans doute; mais faites, comme si je ne le savois point. Quand retournez vous à Lausanne vous même? Vale.

N°

N° CLXXIV.

Mad. DE GENLIS *à M.* GIBBON,

St. Leu, ce 3 Juillet, 1783.

QUOIQUE je doive craindre, Monsieur, que vous ne m'ayez absolument oubliée, je ne puis refuser à mon frère une lettre pour une personne si justement célèbre; il a le plus grand désir de faire connoissance avec vous, Monsieur. Il sait que j'ai eu l'avantage de vous voir dans le court espace de tems que vous avez passé à Paris il y a sept ou huit ans. J'ai eu l'honneur depuis de vous écrire deux fois et de vous envoyer *Le Théâtre d'Education.* Je n'ai point reçu de réponse, ainsi je trouve moi même qu'il y a bien de la présomption à vous importuner encore par une nouvelle lettre, mais j'ai saisi avec plus d'empressement que de *confiance* une occasion de me rappeller à votre souvenir et de vous renouveller l'assurance des sentimens qu'il est impossible de ne pas vous conserver quand on a eu l'avantage de vous connoître et le plaisir de lire vos ouvrages. J'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissante Servante,

DUEREST, Comtesse de GENLIS.

N° CLXXV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

July 10th, 1783.

YOU will read the following lines with more patience and attention than you would probably give

give to an hasty conference, perpetually interrupted by the opening of the door, and perhaps by the quickness of our own tempers. I neither expect nor desire an answer on a subject of extreme importance to myself, but which friendship alone can render interesting to you. We shall soon meet at Sheffield.

It is needless to repeat the reflections which we have sometimes debated together, and which I have often seriously weighed in my silent solitary walks. Notwithstanding your active and ardent spirit, you must allow that there is some perplexity in my present situation, and that my future prospects are distant and cloudy. I have lived too long in the world to entertain a very sanguine idea of the friendship or zeal of ministerial patrons; and we are all sensible how much the powers of patronage are reduced. * * * * * * * At the end of the Parliament, or rather long before that time, (for their lives are not worth a year's purchase,) our Ministers are kicked down stairs, and I am left their disinterested friend, to fight through another opposition, and to expect the fruits of another revolution. But I will take a more favourable supposition, and conceive myself in six months firmly seated at the board of Customs; before the end of the next six months I should infallibly hang myself. Instead of regretting my disappointment, I rejoice in my escape; as I am satisfied that no salary could pay me for the irksomeness of attendance, and the drudgery of business so repug-

nant to my taste, (and I will dare to say,) so unworthy of my character. Without looking forwards to the possibility, still more remote, of exchanging that laborious office for a smaller annuity, there is surely another plan, more reasonable, more simple, and more pleasant; a temporary retreat to a quiet and less expensive scene. In a four years residence at Lausanne, I should live within my income, save, and even accumulate, my ready money; finish my History, an object of profit, as well as fame, expect the contingencies of elderly lives, and return to England at the age of fifty, to form a lasting independent establishment, without courting the smiles of a Minister, or apprehending the downfal of a party. Such have been my serious sober reflections. Yet I much question, whether I should have found courage to follow my reason and my inclination, if a friend had not stretched his hand to draw me out of the dirt. The twentieth of last May I wrote to my friend Deyverdun, after a long interval of silence, to expose my situation, and to consult in what manner I might best arrange myself at Lausanne. From his answer, which I received about a fortnight ago, I have the pleasure to learn, that his heart and his house are both open for my reception; that a family which he had lodged for some years is about to leave him, and that at no other time my company could have been so acceptable and convenient. I shall step, at my arrival, into an excellent apartment and a delightful situation; the fair division of our expenses will render them very moderate, and I shall

pass

pass my time with the companion of my youth, whose temper and studies have always been congenial to my own. I have given him my word of honour to be at Lausanne in the beginning of October, and no power or persuasion can divert me from this IRREVOCABLE resolution, which I am every day proceeding to execute.

I wish, but I scarcely hope, to convince you of the propriety of my scheme; but at least you will allow, that when we are not able to prevent the *follies* of our friends, we should strive to render them as easy and harmless as possible. The arrangement of my house, furniture, and books will be left to meaner hands, but it is to your zeal and judgment alone that I can trust the more important disposal of Lenborough and ****. On these subjects we may go into a committee at Sheffield-place, but you know it is the rule of a committee, not to hear any arguments against the *principle* of the bill. At present I shall only observe, that neither of these negociations ought to detain me here; the former may be dispatched as well, the latter much better, in my absence. *Vale.*

N° CLXXVI.

M. GIBBON *à M.* DEYVERDUN.

Sheffield-place, le 31 Juillet, 1783.

VOTRE papier s'est furieusement rapetissé; vous avez si bien retranché le superflu, que vous oubliez l'essentiel, et ce n'est que par des conjectures fines et savantes que je devine la date du tems et du

lieu. Quant à moi je suis actuellement au château de Milord Sheffield, à quarante milles de Londres, ce qui ajoute deux jours pour l'arrivée et le départ du courier. Je reçois votre lettre (je ne sais du quantième) le 30 Juillet de l'an de grace 1783, je réponds du 31 du dit mois et de la dite année. Le zèle ne se rallentit point pour la consommation du grand œuvre. Je sens votre procédé délicat et généreux, et quoique je n'eusse pas été faché de trouver dans votre fermeté un appui à la mienne, mon inclination est si bien affermie sur la base inébranlable de l'inclination et de la raison, que je ne crains plus les obstacles extérieurs ni intérieurs. Dès que j'ai osé fixer mon départ, les nuages qui le couvroient se sont évanouis; les montagnes s'aplanissoient devant moi, et les dragons qui s'étoient présentés sur ma route, se sont apprivoisés. La semaine passée, je frappai le grand coup par la cassation du bail de ma maison de *Bentinck-street;* et après le mois de Septembre, si je ne couche pas à Lausanne, je coucherai dans la rue. Mes différens bonnets de nuit s'arrangent tous les jours, avec beaucoup d'ordre et de facilité. Lord Sheffield lui même, ce terrible St. George, vrai champion de l'Angleterre, s'est rendu à mes raisons, ou plutôt aux vôtres. Il est charmé du tableau de votre première lettre, et malgré l'activité de son ame, au lieu de me condamner, il me porte envie; et nous disputons (un peu en l'air) sur le projet d'une visite que lui, son aimable compagne et sa fille ainée, se proposent de nous faire dans deux ans aux bords du Lac Léman. Bien loin

loin de combattre mon dessein, il me conseille, il me seconde dans l'exécution, et je n'aurai pas besoin de recourir aux lumières de votre ami Louis Teissier, d'autant plus que pour les menus détails de la correspondance étrangère, je trouve dans le libraire Elmsly un conseiller sage, instruit et discret. * * * * * * * *

Votre calcul de la dépense de la maison surpasse, non pas absolument mes moyens, mais un peu mes espérances et mes conjectures. La consommation en Suisse n'est point chargée d'impôts; le vin y coule comme l'eau de fontaine; votre jardin produit des fruits et des légumes. Se peut-il que vingt ou trente Louis se dépensent tous les mois pour le pain, la viande, le bois, la chandelle, quelque peu de vin étranger, les domestiques de la cuisine, &c.? Je me flatte que dans l'incertitude, vous avez cavé au plus fort; mais enfin tout ce détail se réglera suivant nos goûts et nos facultés; et un mois d'expérience sera plus instructif que cent pages de raisonnemens. La comparaison que vous me demandez de mon ménage de Londres, ne meneroit à rien. A la rigueur je ne tiens pas maison; je ne donne presque jamais à manger: en hyver je dine assez rarement chez moi; je ne soupe jamais; et une partie assez considérable de la dépense (celle des clubs et des *tavernes)* n'entre point dans le compte de la maison. Ma nourriture domestique n'excède pas toutefois votre calcul Lausannois; mais je sens la différence entre le petit couvert triste et mesquin d'un garçon, et la table

honnête et hospitalière de deux amis, qui auront d'autres amis, &c.

Votre idée de masquer mes grandes opérations est de la plus profonde politique; mais les déclarations, et même les démarches qui seront nécessaires pour me retirer de la Chambre des Communes, déclareront un peu trop tôt l'étendue de mes projets. Cependant on peut tirer quelque parti de cette honnête dissimulation, pour calmer un peu les scrupules, et les regrets des dames agées que vous connoissez, et que vous ne connoissez pas. Mais le moyen le plus efficace pour arrêter, ou pour ne pas écouter les mauvais discours, c'est de s'y dérober par une prompte fuite, et depuis que ma résolution a été prise, je compte les jours et les momens. Le 10 du mois prochain je retournerai à Londres, où je travaillerai vivement à préparer ce grand changement d'état. J'attends tous les jours la réponse de Madame Gibbon, à qui j'ai tâché de persuader qu'une entrevue de trois ou quatre jours à Bath, seroit moins douce qu'amère à tous les deux. Si elle se rend, ou fait semblant de se rendre à mes raisons, je compte que tout sera fini la première, ou du moins la seconde semaine de Septembre, et comme je couperai droit par la Champagne, et la Franche-Comté, je pourrois fort bien me trouver à Lausanne vers le 20 ou le 25 de ce mois là, supposé toujours que cette promptitude vous convienne, que votre maison sera libre, et que vous y serez rendu vous même. J'avois quelque idée de me détourner par Strasbourg, de vous prendre à Basle, et de passer avec vous par Berne,

Berne, &c. mais, tout bien considéré, j'aime mieux abréger le grand voyage et réserver cette promenade (si nous avions envie de la faire) pour une saison plus tranquille. J'attends votre réponse dans une trentaine de jours; mais sans l'attendre je vous écrirai de Londres, pour continuer le fil de l'histoire, et peut-être pour vous charger de quelques achats de livres, qui se feront plus commodément à Basle qu'à Lausanne. Vous ne me donnez point de commissions. Cependant ce pays n'est pas sans industrie. Milord et Milady Sheffield vous embrassent très amicalement. Ce sera pour moi la perte la plus sensible.

N° CLXXVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Monday, August 18th, 1783.

IN the preparation of my journey I have not felt any circumstance more deeply than the kind concern of Lady Sheffield and the silent grief of Mrs. Porten. Yet the age of my friends makes a very essential difference. I can scarcely hope ever to see my aunt again; but I flatter myself, that in less than two years, my *sister** will make me a visit, and that in less than four, I shall return it with a cheerful heart at Sheffield-place. Business advances; this morning my books were shipped for Rouen, and will reach Lausanne almost

* Meaning Lady Sheffield.

as soon as myself. On Thursday morning the bulk of the library moves from Bentinck-street to Downing-street. I shall escape from the noise to Hampton Court, and spend three or four days in taking leave. I want to know your precise motions, what day you arrive in town, whether you visit Lord * * * * * * before the races, &c. I am now impatient to be gone, and shall only wait for a last interview with you. Your medley of judges, advocates, politicians, &c. is rather *useful* than pleasant. Town is a vast solitude. Adieu.

N° CLXXVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Bentinck-street, Aug. 20th, 1783.

I AM now concluding one of the most unpleasant days of my life. Will the day of our meeting again be accompanied with proportionable satisfaction? The business of preparation will serve to agitate and divert *my* thoughts; but I do not like your brooding over melancholy ideas in your solitude, and I heartily wish that both you and my dear Lady S. would immediately go over and pass a week at Brighton. Such is our imperfect nature, that dissipation is a far more efficacious remedy than reflection. At all events, let me hear from you soon. I have passed the evening at home, without gaining any intelligence.

N°

N° CLXXIX.

M. DEYVERDUN *à M.* GIBBON.

De Neuchâtel, le 20 Août, 1783.

IL y a long tems que je n'ai été aussi mécontent de moi que je le suis dans ce moment; j'ai fait par l'événement une grande étourderie; j'ai manqué à ceux qui me quittent, et à celui qui vient me joindre; enfin je me suis très mal conduit. M. * * *, qui loge chez moi, me paroîssoit si disposé à quitter ma maison, quand je partis au printems, que ne doutant pas qu'il ne trouvât à s'arranger pendant tout l'été, je la regardois déjà d'avance comme vacante. Le plaisir extrême que j'avois à vous l'offrir, n'a pas peu contribué à soutenir cette illusion; enfin n'entendant parler cependant de rien, je lui ai écrit, après avoir reçu il y a six jours votre dernière, et il vient de me répondre qu'il n'a rien trouvé encore, mais qu'il n'épargnera ni soins ni dépenses, pour déloger, je ne lui ai au reste point marqué de quoi il étoit question; mais je l'ai prié de me dire à quelle époque il croyoit que ma maison pourroit être vacante. Je lui récrirai demain, car il me paroît qu'il est piqué, et tel que je le connois, malgré ce que je pourrai lui marquer, il sera fort empressé à décamper; mais malgré cela, il ne faut plus compter sur la maison entière pour votre arrivée.

Je vous demande mille pardons, mon cher ami, je me mets à votre merci; et en vérité si vous me voyiez en ce moment, vous auriez pitié de moi.

Que

Que nous reste-t-il à faire? car enfin il ne faut pas perdre la tête. J'ai un appartement de deux chambres sans lit, et deux petits cabinets, où vous pourriez être passablement, en attendant que la maison fût tout à fait libre; le tout est à plein pied de la terrasse; je me procurerois un logement au bout de mon jardin, et nous pourrions nous faire apporter à manger, chose pratiquée par nombre de Grands Seigneurs, entr'autres par Monseigneur le Margrave d'Anspach. 2. Ou bien louer un appartement garni que nous occuperons ensemble. Ou enfin 3. passer l'hyver dans quelle autre ville du Continent qu'il vous plaira choisir, ou j'irai vous joindre et vous porter mes excuses. Une réflexion que je fais dans ce moment-ci, et qui me console un peu, c'est que dans votre première lettre, votre résolution ne tenoit point à ma maison, ni même à l'idée de loger et vivre avec moi. Ce second article aura toujours lieu, s'il vous convient, et le premier ne sera que différé; ainsi appaisez-vous, mon cher ami, pardonnez-moi, et écrivez-moi tout de suite lequel de ces partis vous convient le mieux, pour que je m'y conforme; ou si vous en imaginez un nouveau, annoncez-le-moi. Une réflexion qui contribue encore à me consoler, c'est que pendant le tems que nous camperons ainsi en quelque manière, nous aurons le tems de bien voir autour de nous, et de nous arranger à notre aise, d'une manière stable et commode pour notre établissement. Encore une fois cependant, mon cher ami, mille pardons.

Milord

Milord Sheffield s'est montré plus raisonnable que je ne l'aurois cru; diantre! n'allez pas dire cela à sa seigneurie; mais dites-lui, je vous prie, combien me plait l'espoir d'avoir l'honneur de le connoître; je vois encore d'ici son beau parc et le charmant ruisseau. Son suffrage dans des circonstances qui doivent sans doute le prévenir contre moi, me fait le plus grand plaisir, parceque je le regarde comme une bien forte preuve que vous prenez un parti convenable à votre bonheur. Des commissions, je ne saurois trop que vous dire dans ce moment; comme vous avez une maison montée, voy ezs'il n'y auroit pas des choses anglaises auxquelles vous êtes accoutumé, et qui vous feroient plaisir, on en pourroit remplir une caisse. Un service de cette porcelaine de Bath, par exemple, nous conviendroit, ce me semble, assez.

Une de mes craintes maintenant, c'est que cette lettre ne vous parvienne peut-être point avant votre départ; cela seroit très facheux. Toujours aurai-je soin de me trouver à Lausanne, au moins vers le milieu du mois prochain. Des couriers, comme celui que vous amenez, sont ordinairement de vrais domestiques de Grands Seigneurs, chers et importans; mais vous les connoîtrez en route. Ne soyez pas trop faché contre moi, du contretems que je vous annonce, et pensez qu'il y a enfin un appartement honnête de garçon, ma terrasse, mon jardin et votre ami, qui ne peuvent vous manquer—

Tout à vous,

D.

N°

N° CLXXX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Friday, August 22d, 1783.

I AM astonished with your apparition and flight, and am at a loss to conjecture the mighty and sudden business of * * * * *, which could not be delayed till next week. Timeo * * * * * their selfish cunning, and your sanguine unsuspecting spirit. Not dreaming of your arrival, I thought it unnecessary to apprise you, that I delayed my visit to Hampton to this day; on Monday I shall return, and will expect you Tuesday evening, either in Bentinck or Downing-street, as you like best. You have seen the piles of learning accumulated in your parlour; the transportation will be achieved to day, and Bentinck-street is already reduced to a light, ignorant habitation, which I shall inhabit till about the first of September; four days must be allowed for clearing and packing; these I shall spend in Downing-street, and after seeing you a moment on your return, I shall start about Saturday the sixth. London is a desert, and life, without books, business, or society, will be somewhat tedious. From this state, you will judge that your plan coincides very well, only I think you should give me the whole of Wednesday in Bentinck-street. With regard to Bushy, perhaps as a compliment to Lord L. you had better defer it till your return. I admire Gregory Way, and should envy him, if I did not possess a disposition somewhat

what similar to his own. My lady will be reposed, and restored at Brighton; the torrent of Lords, Judges, &c. a proper remedy for you, was a medicine ill-suited to her constitution. I *tenderly* embrace her.

N° CLXXXI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to* * * * * * *.

MY LORD,

I AM ignorant (as I ought to be) of the present state of our negociations of peace; I am likewise ignorant how far I may appear qualified to co-operate in this important and salutary work. If, from any advantages of language or local connections, your lordship should think that my services might be usefully employed, particularly in any future intercourse with the Court of France, permit me to say, that my love of ease and literary leisure shall never stand in competition with the obligations of duty and gratitude which I owe to his Majesty's government.

I am, with the highest respect,

My Lord, &c.

N° CLXXXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lady* SHEFFIELD.

Bentinck-street, August 30th, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

FOR the names of Sheffelina, &c. are too playful for the serious temper of my mind. In the whole period

period of my life I do not recollect a day in which I felt more unpleasant sensations, than that on which I took my leave of Sheffield-place. I forgot my friend Deyverdun, and the fair prospect of quiet and happiness which awaits me at Lausanne. I lost sight of our almost certain meeting at the end of a term, which, at our age, cannot appear very distant; nor could I amuse my uneasiness with the hopes, the more doubtful prospect, of your visit to Switzerland. The agitation of preparing every thing for my departure has, in some degree, diverted these melancholy thoughts; yet I still look forwards to the decisive day (to-morrow se'nnight) with an anxiety of which yourself and Lord Sheffield have the principal share.

Surely never any thing was so unlucky as the unseasonable death of Sir John Russel, on his passage to his friend at Sheffield-place, which so strongly reminded us of the instability of human life and human expectations. The inundation of the assizes must have distressed and overpowered you; but I hope and I wish to hear from yourself, that the air of your favourite Brighton, the bathing, and the quiet society of two or three friends have composed and revived your spirits. Present my love to Sarah, and compliments to Miss Carter, &c. Give me a speedy and satisfactory line.

I am most truly yours.

N° CLXXXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Hon. Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Downing-street, Sept. 8th, 1783.

As we are not unconscious of each other's feelings, I shall only say, that I am glad you did not go alone into Sussex; an American rebel* to dispute with gives a diversion to uneasy spirits, and I heartily wished for such a friend or adversary during the remainder of the day. No letter from Deyverdun; the post is arrived, but two Flanders mails are due. Æolus does not seem to approve of my designs, and there is little merit in waiting till Friday. I should wait with more reluctance, did I think there was much chance of success. I dine with Craufurd, and if any thing is decided, will send an extraordinary Gazette. You have obliged me beyond expression, by your kindness to aunt Kitty;† she will drink her afternoon tea at Sheffield next Friday. For my sake Lady Sheffield will be kind to the old lady, who will not be troublesome, and will vanish at the first idea of Brighton. Has not that salubrious air already produced some effects? Peace will be proclaimed to-morrow; odd! as war was never declared. The buyers of stock seem as indifferent as yourself about the definitive treaty. Tell Maria, that though you had forgotten the

* Mr. Silas Deane, formerly in a diplomatic situation at Paris; a man well-informed in the commercial relations of several countries.

† Mrs. Porten.

Annales

Annales de la Vertu, I have directed them to be sent, but know nothing of their plan or merit. Adieu. When you see my Lady, say every thing tender and friendly to her. I did not know how much I loved her. She may depend upon my keeping a separate, though not perhaps a very frequent account with her. *A propos*, I think aunt Kitty has a secret wish to sleep in my room; if it is not occupied, she might be indulged. Once more, adieu.

N° CLXXXIV.

M. GIBBON *à M.* DEYVERDUN.

Downing-street, à Londres, le 9 Septembre, 1783.

SELON ma diligence ordinaire je répondis le 31 Juillet à votre lettre sans date, reçue le jour auparavant. Je voyois couler le mois d'Août, fortement persuadé, qu'il ne s'acheveroit point, sans m'apporter votre *ultimatum*. Nous voici au 9 Septembre, quarante jours depuis ma missive, et je n'ai point encore de vos nouvelles! Il est vrai que des vents contraires nous retiennent deux malles de Flandres, et vos dépêches peuvent et doivent s'y trouver. Mais si elles ne m'apportent rien de votre part, je serai très étonné, et pas moins embarrassé. Se peut-il que vos lettres, ou les miennes se soient égarées en chemin? êtes vous mort? êtes vous malade? avez vous changé d'avis? est-il survenu des difficultés? Je vous ai écrit de nouveau le 19 Août; mais l'incertitude de mes craintes me fait encore hasarder ce billet. Après des travaux inouis, j'ai enfin

enfin brisé tous mes liens, et depuis ma résolution je n'ai pas eu un instant de regrets; ma vive impatience se fortifie tous les jours, et depuis que j'ai abandonné ma maison et ma bibliothèque, l'ennui a prêté des ailes à l'espérance et à l'amitié. Enfin j'avois fixé mon départ au commencement de la semaine; à cette heure il est renvoyé à Vendredi prochain, 12 de ce mois, dans la supposition toujours d'une lettre de votre part, car je ne saurois entreprendre ma course sans être assuré de la réception qui m'attend au bout. Je me ferai toujours précéder par un mot de billet; mais la saison est tellement orageuse, qu'il me sera impossible d'arrêter le jour de mon arrivée à Lausanne, jusqu'à ce que je me voye en sureté au-delà de la mer. Adieu. Vous devez être de retour à Lausanne. Annoncez moi aux enfans de mes anciennes connoissances.

N° CLXXXV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Thursday, September 11th, 1783.

THE scheme*(which you may impart to my Lady) is completely vanished, and I support the disappointment with heroic patience. Craufurd goes down to Chatsworth to-morrow, and Fox does not recommend my waiting for the event; yet the appointment is not yet declared, and I am ignorant of the name and merits of my successful compe-

* Of going as Secretary to the Embassy to Paris.

titor. Is it not wonderful that I am still in suspence, without a letter from Deyverdun? No, it is not wonderful, since no Flanders mail is arrived: to-morrow three will be due. I am therefore in a miserable state of doubt and anxiety; in a much better house indeed than my own, but without books, or business, or society. I send or call two or three times each day to Elmsly's, and can only say that I shall fly the next day, Saturday, Sunday, &c. after I have got my *quietus*. No news, except that we keep Negapatnam. The other day the French Ambassador mentioned that the Empress of Russia, a precious ———, had proposed to ratify the principles of the armed neutrality, by a definitive treaty; but that the French, obliging creatures! had declared, that they would neither propose nor accept an article so disagreeable to England. Grey Elliot was pleased with your attention, and says you are a perfect master of the subject.* Adieu. If I could be sure that no mail would arrive to-morrow, I would run down with my aunt. My heart is not light. I embrace my Lady with true affection, but I need not repeat it.

N° CLXXXVI.

Lord LOUGHBOROUGH *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

MY DEAR SIR, Bedford-square, Sept. 11th, 1783.

THIS is not literally but not far from it, the first time since I have attempted to write; when you

* Policy of Great Britain towards America.

did

did me the favour to call, I was less able to speak. My disorder, which, in substance, I believe, was gout, assumed so different a form that it misled my medical friends; and in the puzzle I have suffered more, and been more seriously in danger than I ever was. At present I recover sensibly, but very slowly; and I am to try about the middle of the week, a very slow journey to Buxton.

Your letter was a real addition to my complaints at the time I received it, and I cannot yet bring myself to look at it with a healthy eye. Many selfish considerations mingle themselves with my judgment upon it, and, no doubt, bias my opinion. I extremely regret the loss of your society, which in a more settled state than the late times have afforded, I hoped to have enjoyed more frequently. I am confident that not only Lord North, but some other friends of yours, who, if any thing is permanent, would have found their consequence increase, never would have lost sight of your object. Absence delays and slackens the most active pursuits of one's friends, and though some of us will miss you too often to forget, we shall want to conjure you back again to remind others.

I shall beg the favour of Lord Sheffield to do nothing about your seat without apprizing me. My state of health drives me as fast as I can to Buxton, and the moment I feel myself re-established, a thousand cares will bring me back to London. I do not propose to be gone above a month, and I trust you will not have taken your

departure before the 10th of next month, when I hope to see you.

I ever am, my dear Sir,
Your's most sincerely,
LOUGHBOROUGH.

N° CLXXXVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Downing-street, Friday, Sept. 12th, 1783.

SINCE my departure is near, and inevitable, you and Lady Sheffield will be rather sorry than glad to hear that I am detained, day after day, by the caprice of the winds. A state of suspence is painful, but it will be alleviated by the short notes which I mean to write, and hope to receive, every post. A separation has some advantages, though they are purchased with bitter pangs; among them is the pleasure of knowing how dear we are to our friends, and how dear they are to us. It will be a kind office to sooth aunt Kitty's sorrows, and "to rock the cradle of declining age." She will be vexed to hear that I am not yet gone; but she is reasonable and cheerful. Adieu. Most truly yours.

N° CLXXXVIII.

The Same to the Same.

Downing-street, Saturday, September 13th, 1783.

Enfin la bombe a crevé.—The three Flanders mails are arrived this day, but without any letters from Deyverdun. Most incomprehensible! After many

many adverse reflections, I have finally resolved to begin my journey on Monday; a heavy journey, with much apprehension, and much regret. Yet I consider, first, That if he is alive and well, (an unpleasant *if,*) scarcely any event can have happened to disappoint our mutual wishes; and, 2dly, That, supposing the very worst, even that worst would not overthrow my general plan of living abroad, though it would derange my hopes of a quiet and delightful establishment with my friend. Upon the whole, without giving way to melancholy fears, my reason conjectures that his indolence thought it superfluous to write any more, that it was my business to act and move, and his duty to sit still and receive me with open arms. London is a desert. Sir Henry Clinton found me out this morning: he talks with rapture of visits to be made at Sheffield, and returned at Brighton. I envy him those visits more than the red ribbon. Adieu.

N° CLXXXIX.

The Same to the Same.

Dover, Wednesday, 17th September, 1783, ten o'clock in the morning.

THE best laws are useless without proper guardians. Your letter per Sunday's post is not arrived, (as its fate is uncertain and irrevocable, you must repeat any material article,) but that per Monday's post reached me last night. Oliver* is more insolent

* Mr. Oliver Cromwell, the only male descendant of the Protector; a respectable Solicitor, with whom I transacted some

solent than his great-grandfather; but you will cope with one, and would not have been much afraid of the other. Last night the wind was so high, that the vessel could not stir from the harbour; this day it is brisk and fair. We are flattered with the hope of making Calais harbour by the same tide, in three hours and a half; but any delay will leave the disagreeable option of a tottering boat or a tossing night. What a cursed thing to live in an island, this step is more awkward than the whole journey! The triumvirate of this memorable embarkation will consist of the grand Gibbon, Henry Laurence, Esq. President of Congress, and Mr. Secretary, Colonel, Admiral, Philosopher, Thompson,* attended by three horses, who are not the most agreeable fellow passengers. If we survive, I will finish and seal my letter at Calais. Our salvation shall be ascribed to the prayers of my Lady and Aunt; for I do believe they both pray.

Boulogne, Thursday Morning, Ten o'clock.

Instead of Calais, the wind has driven us to Boulogne, where we landed in the evening, without much noise and difficulty. The night is passed, the custom-house is dispatched, the post-horses are ordered, and I shall start about eleven o'clock. I had not the least symptom of sea-sickness, while

business on the part of Mr. Gibbon, and why my friend denominates him proud I cannot guess. He was a very sensible pleasing gentleman. S.

* Now Count Rumford.

my

my companions were spewing round me. Laurence has read the pamphlet,* and thinks it has done much mischief. A good sign! Adieu. The Captain is impatient. I shall reach Lausanne by the end of next week, but may probably write on the road.

N° CXC.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Langres, September 23d, 1783.

LET the geographical Maria place before you the map of France, and trace my progress as far as this place, through the following towns: Boulogne, (where I was forced to land,) St. Omer, (where I recovered my road,) Aire, Bethune, Douay, Cambray, St. Quintin, La Fere, Laon, Rheims, Chalons, St. Dizier, and Langres, where I have just finished my supper. The Inns, in general, more agreeable to the palate, than to the sight or smell. But, with some short exceptions of time and place, I have enjoyed good weather and good roads, and at the end of the ninth day, I feel so little fatigued, that the journey appears no more than a pleasant airing. I have generally conversed with Homer and Lord Clarendon, often with Caplin and Muff;† sometimes with the French postillions, of the abovementioned animals the least rational. To-

* Lord Sheffield's Observations on the Commerce of the American States.

† His dog.

morrow I lie at Besançon, and, according to the arrangement of post or hired horses, shall either sup at Lausanne on Friday, or dine there Saturday. From Lausanne I will immediately write. If aunt Kitty's gratitude and good-breeding have not driven her away upon the first whisper of Brighton, she will share this intelligence; if she is gone, a line from you would be humane and attentive. Adieu. I am going into an excellent bed, about six feet high from the ground.

N° CXCI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, September 30th, 1783.

I ARRIVED safe in harbour last Saturday, the 27th instant, about ten o'clock in the morning; but as the post only goes out twice a week, it was not in my power to write before this day. Except one day, between Langres and Besançon, which was laborious enough, I finished my easy and gentle airing without any fatigue, either of mind or body. I found Deyverdun well and happy, but much more happy at the sight of a friend, and the accomplishment of a scheme which he had so long and impatiently desired. His garden, terrace, and *park*, have even exceeded the most sanguine of my expectations and remembrances; and you yourself cannot have forgotten the charming prospect of the lake, the mountains, and the declivity of the Pays de Vaud. But as human life is perpetually

perpetually chequered with good and evil, I have found some disappointments on my arrival. The easy nature of Deyverdun, his indolence, and his impatience, had prompted him to reckon too positively that his house would be vacant at Michaelmas; some unforeseen difficulties have arisen, or have been discovered when it was already too late, and the consummation of our hopes is (I am much afraid) postponed to next spring. At first I was knocked down by the unexpected thunderbolt, but I have gradually been reconciled to my fate, and have granted a free and gracious pardon to my friend. As his own apartment, which afforded me a temporary shelter, is much too narrow for a settled residence, we hired for the winter a convenient ready-furnished apartment in the nearest part of the Rue de Bourg, whose back door leads in three steps to the terrace and garden, as often as a tolerable day shall tempt us to enjoy their beauties; and this arrangement has even its advantage, of giving us time to deliberate and provide, before we enter on a larger and more regular establishment. But this is not the sum of my misfortunes; hear, and pity! The day after my arrival (Sunday) we had just finished a very temperate dinner, and intended to begin a round of visits on foot, *chapeau sous le bras*, when, most unfortunately, Deyverdun proposed to shew me something in the court; we boldly and successfully ascended a flight of stone steps, but in the descent I missed my footing, and strained, or sprained, my ancle in a painful manner. My old latent

latent enemy, (I do not mean the Devil,) who is always on the watch, has made an ungenerous use of his advantage, and I much fear that my arrival at Lausanne will be marked with a fit of the gout, though it is quite unnecessary that the intelligence or suspicion should find its way to Bath. Yesterday afternoon I lay, or at least sat, in state to receive visits, and at the same moment my room was filled with four different nations. The loudest of these nations was the single voice of the Abbé Raynal, who, like your friend, has chosen this place for the asylum of freedom and history. His conversation, which might be very agreeable, is intolerably loud, peremptory, and insolent; and you would imagine that he alone was the monarch and legislator of the world. Adieu. I embrace my Lady, and the infants. With regard to the important transactions for which you are constituted plenipotentiary, I expect with some impatience, but with perfect confidence, the result of your labours. You may remember what I mentioned of my conversation with Charles Fox about the place of Minister at Berne: I have talked it over with Deyverdun, who does not dislike the idea, provided this place was allowed to be my villa, during at least two-thirds of the year; but for my part, I am sure that * * * * * are worth more than ministerial friendship and gratitude; so I am inclined to think, that they are preferable to an office which would be procured with difficulty, enjoyed with constraint and expense, and lost, perhaps,

perhaps, next April, in the annual revolutions of our domestic government. Again adieu.

N° CXCII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lady* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, October 28th, 1783.

THE progress of my gout is in general so regular, and there is so much uniformity in the History of its Decline and Fall, that I have hitherto indulged my laziness, without much shame or remorse, without supposing that you would be very anxious for my safety, which has been sufficiently provided for by the triple care of my friend Deyverdun, my humbler friend Caplin, and a very conversable physician, (not the famous Tissot), whose ordinary fee is ten batz, about fifteen pence English. After the usual increase and decrease of the member (for it has been confined to the injured part) the gout has retired in good order, and the remains of weakness, which obliged me to move on the rugged pavement of Lausanne with a stick, or rather small crutch, are to be ascribed to the sprain, which might have been a much more serious business. As I have now spent a month at Lausanne, you will inquire with much curiosity, more kindness, and some mixture of spite and malignity, how far the place has answered my expectations, and whether I do not repent of a resolution which has appeared so rash and ridiculous to my ambitious friends? To this question, however

ever natural and reasonable, I shall not return an immediate answer, for two reasons: 1. *I have not yet made a fair trial.* The disappointment and delay with regard to Deyverdun's house, will confine us this winter to lodgings, rather convenient than spacious or pleasant. I am only beginning to recover my strength and liberty, and to look about on persons and things; the greatest part of those persons are in the country taken up with their vintage; my books are not yet arrived, and, in short, I cannot look upon myself, as settled in that comfortable way which you and I understand and relish. Yet the weather has been heavenly, and till this time, the end of October, we enjoy the brightness of the sun, and somewhat gently complain of its immoderate heat. 2. If I should be too sanguine in explaining my satisfaction in what I have done, you would ascribe that satisfaction to the novelty of the scene, and the inconstancy of man; and I deem it far more safe and prudent to postpone any positive declaration, till I am placed by experience beyond the danger of repentance and recantation. Yet of one thing I am sure, that I possess in this country, as well as in England, the best cordial of life, a sincere, tender, and sensible friend, adorned with the most valuable and pleasant qualities both of the heart and head. The inferior enjoyments of leisure and society are likewise in my power; and in the short excursions which I have hitherto made, I have commenced or renewed my acquaintance with a certain number of persons, more especially women, (who, at least in France

France and this country, are undoubtedly superior to our prouder sex,) of rational minds and elegant manners. I breakfast alone, and have declared that I receive no visits in a morning, which you will easily suppose is devoted to study. I find it impossible, without inconvenience, to defer my dinner beyond two o'clock. We have got a very good woman cook. Deyverdun, who is somewhat of an Epicurean philosopher, understands the management of a table, and we frequently invite a guest or two to share our luxurious, but not extravagant repasts. The afternoons are (and will be much more so hereafter) devoted to society, and I shall find it necessary to play at cards much oftener than in London: but I do not dislike that way of passing a couple of hours, and I shall not be ruined at shilling whist. As yet I have not supped, but in the course of the winter I must sometimes sacrifice an evening abroad, and in exchange I hope sometimes to steal a day at home, without going into company. * * * * * * *
I have all this time been talking to Lord Sheffield; I hope that he has dispatched my affairs, and it would give me pleasure to hear that I am no longer member for Lymington, nor Lord of *Lenborough*. Adieu. I feel every day that the distance serves only to make me think with more tenderness of the persons whom I love.

N°

N° CXCIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, November 14th, 1783.

LAST Tuesday, November eleventh, after plaguing and vexing yourself all the morning, about some business of your fertile creation, you went to the House of Commons, and passed the afternoon, the evening, and perhaps the night, without sleep or food, stifled in a close room by the heated respiration of six hundred politicians, inflamed by party and passion, and tired of the repetition of dull nonsense, which, in that illustrious assembly, so far outweighs the proportion of reason and eloquence. On the same day, after a studious morning, a friendly dinner, and a cheerful assembly of both sexes, I retired to rest at eleven o'clock, satisfied with the past day, and certain that the next would afford me the return of the same quiet and rational enjoyments. *Which has the better bargain?* Seriously, I am every hour more grateful to my own judgment and resolution, and only regret that I so long delayed the execution of a favourite plan, which I am convinced is the best adapted to my character and inclinations. Your conjecture of the revolutions of my face, when I heard that the house was for this winter inaccessible, is probable, but false. I bore my disappointment with the temper of a sage, and only use it to render the prospect of next year still more pleasing to my imagination.

imagination. You are likewise mistaken, in imputing my fall to the awkwardness of my limbs. The same accident might have happened to Slingsby himself, or to any *hero* of the age, the most distinguished for his *bodily activity*. I have now resumed my entire strength, and walk with caution, yet with speed and safety, through the streets of this mountainous city. After a month of the finest autumn I ever saw, the *bise** made me feel my old acquaintance; the weather is now milder, and this present day is dark and rainy, not much better than what you probably enjoy in England. The town is comparatively empty, but the Noblesse are returning every day from their chateaux, and I already perceive that I shall have more reason to complain of dissipation than of dulness. As I told Lady S. I am afraid of being too rash and hasty in expressing my satisfaction; but I must again repeat, that appearances are extremely favourable. I am sensible that general praise conveys no distinct ideas, but it is very difficult to enter into particulars where the individuals are unknown, or indifferent to our correspondent. You have forgotten the *old* generation, and in twenty years a new one is grown up. Death has swept many from the world, and chance or choice has brought many to this place. If you inquire after your old acquaintance Catherine, you must be told, that she is solitary, ugly, blind, and universally forgotten. Your later flame, and our goddess, the Eliza,† passed a

* The North East wind.

† Lady Elizabeth Foster, now Duchess of Devonshire.

month

month at the inn. She came to consult Tissot, and was acquainted with Cerjat. And now to business. * * * * * * * *

With regard to meaner cases, these are two, which you can and will undertake. 1. As I have not renounced my country, I should be glad to hear of your parliamentary squabbles, which may be done with small trouble and expense. After an interesting debate, my Lady in due time may cut the speeches from Woodfall. You will write or dictate any curious anecdote, and the whole, inclosed in a letter, may be dispatched to Lausanne. 2. A set of Wedgewood china, which we talked of in London, and which would be most acceptable here. As you have a *sort* of a taste, I leave to your own choice the colour and the pattern; but as I have the inclination and means to live very handsomely *here*, I desire that the size and number of things may be adequate to a plentiful table. If you see Lord North, assure him of my gratitude; had he been a more successful friend, I should now be drudging at the Board of Customs, or vexed with business in the amiable society of ———. To Lord Loughborough present an affectionate sentiment; I am satisfied of his intention to serve me, if I had not been in such a fidget. I am sure you will not fail, while you are in town, to visit and comfort poor aunt Kitty. I wrote to her on my first arrival, and she may be assured that I will not neglect her. To my Lady I say nothing; we have now our private correspondence, into which the eye of an husband should not be permitted to intrude.

intrude. I am really satisfied with the success of the pamphlet;* not only because I have a sneaking kindness for the author, but as it shews me that plain sense, full information, and warm spirit, are still acceptable in the world. You talk of Lausanne as a place of retirement, yet, from the situation and freedom of the Pays de Vaud, all nations, and all extraordinary characters, are astonished to meet each other. The Abbé Raynal, the grand Gibbon, and Mercier, author of the *Tableau de Paris*, have been in the same room. The other day the Prince and Princess de Ligne, the Duke and Duchess d'Ursel, &c. came from Brussels on purpose (literally true) to act a comedy at * * * * * *, in the country. He was dying, and could not appear; but we had comedy, ball, and supper. The event seems to have revived him; for that great man is fallen from his ancient glory, and his nearest relations refuse to see him. I told you of poor Catherine's deplorable state; but Madame de Mesery, at the age of sixty-nine, is still handsome. Adieu.

N° CXCIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, December 20th, 1783.

I HAVE received both your epistles; and as any excuse will serve a man who is at the same time

* Observations on the Commerce with the American States.

very busy and very idle, I patiently expected the second, before I entertained any thoughts of answering the first. * * * * * *
I therefore conclude, that on every principle of common sense, before this moment your active zeal has already expelled me from the house, to which, without regret, I bid an everlasting farewel. The agreeable hour of five o'clock in the morning, at which you commonly retire, does not tend to revive my attachment; but if you add the soft hours of your morning Committee,* in the discussion of taxes, customs, frauds, smugglers, &c. I think I should beg to be released and quietly sent to the gallies, as a place of leisure and freedom. Yet I do not depart from my general principles of toleration. Some animals are made to live in the water, others on the earth, many in the air, and some, as it is now believed, even in fire. Your present hurry of Parliament I perfectly understand; when opposition make the attack,

—— *Horæ*
Momento cita mors venit, aut victoria læta.

But when the minister brings forward any strong and decisive measure, he at length prevails; but his progress is retarded at every step, and in every stage of the bill, by a pertinacious, though unsuccessful, minority. I am not sorry to hear of the splendour of Fox; I am proud, in a foreign country, of his fame and abilities, and our little animo-

* A select Committee for inquiring into frauds committed in respect to the revenue.

sities are extinguished by my retreat from the English stage. With regard to the substance of the business, I scarcely know what to think: the vices of the Company,* both in their persons and their constitution, were manifold and manifest; the danger was imminent, and such an empire, with thirty millions of subjects, was not to be lost for trifles. Yet, on the other hand, the faith of charters, the rights of property! I hesitate and tremble. Such an innovation would at least require that the remedy should be as certain as the evil, and the proprietors may perhaps insinuate, that *they* were as competent guardians of their own affairs, as either * * * or * * * * * * *. Their acting without a salary, seems childish, and their not being removable by the Crown, is a strange and dangerous precedent. But enough of politics, which I now begin to view through a thin, cold, distant cloud, yet not without a reasonable degree of curiosity and patriotism. From the papers (especially when you add an occasional slice of the Chronicle) I shall be amply informed of facts and debates. From you I expect the causes, rather than the events, the true springs of action, and those interesting anecdotes which seldom ascend the garret of a Fleet-street editor. You say that many friends (alias acquaintance) have expressed curiosity and concern; I should not wish to be immediately forgotten. That others (you once mentioned Gerard Hamilton) condemn government, for suffering the

* East India Company.

departure of a man who might have done them some credit and some service, perhaps as much as * * * * himself. To you, in the confidence of friendship, and without either pride or resentment, I will fairly own that I am somewhat of Gerard's opinion; and if I did not compare it with the rest of his character, I should be astonished that * * * * suffered me to depart, without even a civil answer to my letter. Were I capable of hating a man, whom it is not easy to hate, I should find myself amply revenged by * * *. But the happy souls in Paradise are susceptible only of love and pity, and though Lausanne is not a Paradise, more especially in winter, I do assure you, in sober prose, that it has hitherto fulfilled, and even surpassed, my warmest expectation. Yet I often cast a look toward Sheffield-Place, where you now repose, if you can repose, during the Christmas recess. Embrace my Lady, the young Baroness, and the gentle Louisa, and insinuate to your silent Consort, that separate letters require separate answers. Had I an air balloon, the great topic of modern conversation, I would call upon you till the meeting of Parliament. *Vale.*

N° CXCV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* PORTEN.

DEAR MADAM, Lausanne, December 27th, 1783.

THE unfortunate are loud and loquacious in their complaints, but real happiness is content with its own silent enjoyment; and if that happiness is of a quiet

a quiet uniform kind, we suffer days and weeks to elapse without communicating our sensations to a distant friend. By you, therefore, whose temper and understanding have extracted from human life on every occasion the best and most comfortable ingredients, my silence will always be interpreted as an evidence of content, and you would only be alarmed (the danger is not at hand) by the too frequent repetition of my letters. Perhaps I should have continued to slumber, I don't know how long, had I not been awakened by the anxiety which you express in your last letter. * * * * *

In speaking of the happiness which I enjoy, you will agree with me, in giving the preference to a sincere and sensible friend; and though you cannot discern the full extent of his merit, you will easily believe that Deyverdun is the man. Perhaps two persons so perfectly fitted to live together, were never formed by nature and education. We have both read and seen a great variety of objects; the lights and shades of our different characters are happily blended, and a friendship of thirty years has taught us to enjoy our mutual advantages, and to support our unavoidable imperfections. In love and marriage, some harsh sounds will sometimes interrupt the harmony, and in the course of time, like our neighbours, we must expect some disagreeable moments; but confidence and freedom are the two pillars of our union, and I am much mistaken, if the building be not solid and comfortable. In this season I rise (not at four in the morning) but a little before eight; at nine, I am called from

my study to breakfast, which I always perform alone, in the English style, and, with the aid of Caplin,* I perceive no difference between Lausanne and Bentinck-street. Our mornings are usually passed in separate studies; we never approach each other's door without a previous message, or thrice knocking, and my apartment is already sacred and formidable to strangers. I dress at half past one, and at two (an early hour, to which I am not perfectly reconciled) we sit down to dinner. After dinner, and the departure of our company, one, two, or three friends, we read together some amusing book, or play at chess, or retire to our rooms, or make visits, or go to the coffee-house. Between six and seven the assemblies begin, and I am oppressed only with their number and variety. Whist, at shillings or half-crowns, is the game I generally play, and I play three rubbers with pleasure. Between nine and ten we withdraw to our bread and cheese, and friendly converse, which sends us to bed at eleven; but these sober hours are too often interrupted by private or numerous suppers, which I have not the courage to resist, though I practise a laudable abstinence at the best furnished tables. Such is the skeleton of my life; it is impossible to communicate a perfect idea of the vital and substantial parts, the characters of the men and women with whom I have very easily connected myself in looser and closer bonds, according to their inclination and my own. If I do

* His English valet de chambre.

not

not deceive myself, and if Deyverdun does not flatter me, I am already a general favourite; and as our likings and dislikes are commonly mutual, I am equally satisfied with the freedom and elegance of manners, and (after proper allowances and exceptions) with the worthy and amiable qualities of many individuals. The autumn has been beautiful, and the winter hitherto mild, but in January we must expect some severe frost. Instead of rolling in a coach, I walk the streets, wrapped up in a fur cloak; but this exercise is wholesome, and except an accidental fit of the gout of a few days, I never enjoyed better health. I am no longer in Pavillard's house, where I was almost starved with cold and hunger, and you may be assured that I now enjoy every benefit of comfort, plenty, and even decent luxury. You wish me happy; acknowledge that such a life is more conducive to happiness, than five nights in the week passed in the House of Commons, or five mornings spent at the Custom-house. Send me, in return, a fair account of your own situation in mind and body. I am satisfied your own good sense would have reconciled you to inevitable separation; but there never was a more suitable diversion than your visit to Sheffield-Place. Among the innumerable proofs of friendship which I have received from that family, there are none which affect me more sensibly than their kind civilities to you, though I am persuaded that they are at least as much on your account as on mine. At length Madame de * * * * * is delivered by her tyrant's death;

her daughter, a valuable woman of this place, has made some inquiries, and though her own circumstances are narrow, she will not suffer her father's widow to be left totally destitute. I am glad you derived so much melancholy pleasure from the letters, yet had I known it, I should have withheld

* * * * *.

N° CXCVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, January 24th, 1784.

WITHIN two or three days after your last *gracious* epistle, your complaints were silenced, and your inquiries were satisfied, by an ample dispatch of four pages which overflowed the inside of the cover, and in which I exposed my opinions of things in general, public as well as private, as they existed in my mind, in my state of ignorance and error, about the eighteenth or twentieth of last month. Within a week after that date I epistolised, in the same rich and copious strain, the two venerable females of Newman-street and Bath, whose murmurings must now be changed into songs of gratitude and applause. My correspondence with the holy matron of Northamptonshire has been less lively and loquacious. You have not forgotten the author's vindication of himself from the foul calumnies of pretended Christians. Within a fortnight after his arrival at Lausanne,

Lausanne, he communicated the joyful event to Mrs. Esther Gibbon. She answered, per return of post, both letters at the same time, and in very dutiful language, almost excusing her advice, which was intended for my spiritual, as well as temporal good, and assuring me, that *nobody should be able to injure me with her.* Unless the saint is an hypocrite, such an expression must convey a favourable and important meaning. At all events, it is worth giving *ourselves* some trouble about her, without indulging any sanguine expectations of inheritance. So much for my females; with regard to my male correspondents, you are the only one to whom I have given any signs of my existence, though I have formed many a generous resolution. Yet I am not insensible of the kind and friendly manner in which Lord Loughborough has distinguished me. He could have no inducements of interest, and now that I view the distant picture with impartial eyes, I am convinced that (for a statesman) he was sincere in his wishes to serve me. When you see *him*, the Paynes, Eden, Craufurd, &c. tell them that I am well, happy, and ashamed. On your side, the zeal and diligence of your pen has surprised and delighted me, and your letters, at this interesting moment, are exactly such as I wished them to be—authentic anecdotes, and rational speculations, worthy of a man who acts a part in the great theatre, and who fills a seat, not only in the general Pandæmonium, but in the private council of the Princes of the infernal regions.

With

With regard to the detail of parliamentary operations, I must repeat my request to you, or rather to my Lady, who will now be on the spot, that she will write, not with her pen, but with her scissars, and that after every debate which deserves to pass the sea and the mountains, she will dissect the faithful narrative of Woodfall, and send it off by the next post, as an agreeable supplement to the meagre accounts of our weekly papers. The wonderful revolutions of last month have sounded to my ear more like the shifting scenes of a comedy, or comic opera, than like the sober events of real and modern history; and the irregularity of our winter posts, which sometimes retarded, and sometimes hastened the arrival of the dispatches, has increased the confusion of our ideas. Surely the Lord has blinded the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants; the obstinacy of last spring was nothing compared to the headstrong and headlong madness of this winter. I expect with much impatience the first days of your meeting; the purity and integrity of the coalition will suffer a fiery trial; but if they are true to themselves and to each other, a majority of the House of Commons must prevail; the rebellion of the young gentlemen will be crushed, and the masters will resume the government of the school. After the address and answer, I have no conception that Parliament can be dissolved during the session; but if the present Ministry can outlive the storm, I think the death-warrant will infallibly be signed in the summer.

Here

Here I blush for my country, without confessing her shame. Fox acted like a man of honour, yet surely his union with Pitt affords the only hope of salvation. How miserably are we wasting the season of peace!

I have written three pages before I come to my own business and feelings. * * * * * * *

N° CXCVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

BARON! Lausanne, February 2d, 1784.

AFTER my last enormous dispatch, nothing can remain, except some small gleanings, or occasional hints: and thus in order: I am not conscious that any of your valuable MSS. have miscarried, or that I have omitted to answer any essential particulars. They stand in my bureau carefully arranged, and docketed under the following dates; September twenty-three, October twenty-three, November eighteen, December two, December fifteen, December nineteen, December twenty-three, December twenty-nine, January sixteen, which last I received this day, February second. For greater perspicuity, it will not be amiss (on either side) to number our future epistles, by a conspicuous Roman character inscribed in the front, to which we may at any time refer. But instead of writing by Ostend, the shorter and surer way, especially on all occasions that deserve celerity, will be

be to inclose them to my banker, M. de Lessart at Paris, who will forward them to me. Through Germany the passage by sea is more uncertain, the roads worse, and the distance greater: we often complain of delay and irregularity at this interesting moment. By your last I find that you have boldly and generously opened a treaty with the enemy, which I proposed with fear and hesitation. I impatiently expect the result; and again repeat, that *whatever* you can obtain for * * * * I shall consider it as so much saved out of the fire, &c. &c. Do you remember Dunning's motion (in the year 1780) to address the Crown against a dissolution of Parliament; a simple address we rejected, as an infringement on the prerogative? yet how far short of these strong democratical measures, for which you have probably voted, as I should probably have done: such is the contagion of party. Fox drives most furiously, yet I should not be surprised if Pitt's moderation and character should insensibly win the nation, and even the House, to espouse his cause. * * * * * * Unless when I look back on England with a selfish or a tender regard, my hours roll away very pleasantly, and I can again repeat with truth, that I have not regretted one single moment the step which I have taken. We are now at the height of the winter dissipation, and I am peculiarly happy when I can steal away from great assemblies, and suppers of twenty or thirty people, to a more private party of some of those persons whom I begin

to

to call my friends. Till we are settled in our house little can be expected on our side; yet I have already given two or three handsome dinners; and though every thing is grown dearer, I am not alarmed at the general view of my expense. Deyverdun salutes you; and we are agreed that few married couples are better entitled to the flitch of bacon than we shall be at the end of the year. When I had written about half this epistle my books arrived: at our first meeting all was rapture and confusion, and two or three posts, from the second to this day, the fourteenth, have been suffered to depart unnoticed. Your letter of the twenty-seventh of January, which was not received till yesterday, has again awakened me, and I thought the surest way would be to send off this single sheet without any farther delay.

I sincerely rejoice in the stability of Parliament;* and the first faint dawn of reconciliation, which must however be effected by the equal balance of parties, rather than by the wisdom of the country gentlemen.†

My Lady!—But it would be highly incongruous to begin my letter at the bottom of the page. Adieu, therefore, till next post.

* This supposition was founded on Mr. Banks's declaration in the name of Mr. Pitt.

† At the St. Alban's Tavern.

N° CXCVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, May 11th, 1784.

ALAS! alas! alas! We may now exchange our mutual condolence. Last Christmas, on the change of administration, I was struck with the thunderbolt of the unexpected event, and in the approaching dissolution I foresaw the loss of * * * * * * * * *. The long continuance and various changes of the tempest rendered me by degrees callous and insensible; when the art of the mariners was exhausted I felt that we were sinking, I expected the ship to founder, and when the fatal moment arrived, I was even pleased to be delivered from hope and fear, to the calmness of despair. I now turn my eyes, not on the past, but on the present and the future; what is lost I try to consider as if it never had existed; and every day I congratulate my own good fortune, let me say my prudence and resolution, in migrating from your noisy stage to a scene of repose and content. But even in this separate state, I was still anxious for my friend upon English earth, and at first was much delighted with your hint, that you were setting off for Coventry, without any prospect of an opposition. Every post, Wednesdays and Saturdays, I eagerly looked for the intelligence of your victory; and in spite of my misbehaviour, which I do not deny, I must abuse *my Lady*, rather than you, for leaving me in so painful a situation.

Each

Each day raised and increased my apprehension; the *Courier de l'Europe* first announced the contest, the English papers proclaimed your defeat, and your last letter, which I received four days ago, shewed me that you exerted first the spirit, and at last the temper of an hero. I am not much surprised that you should have been swept away in the general unpopularity, since even in this quiet place, your friends are considered as a factious crew, acting in direct opposition both to the King and people. For myself I am at a loss what to say. If this repulse should teach you to renounce all connection with Kings and Ministers, and Patriots and Parties, and Parliaments; for all of which you are by many degrees too honest; I should exclaim, with Teague of respectable memory, "By my shoul, dear joy, you have *gained* a loss." Private life, whether contemplative or active, has surely more solid and independent charms; you have *some* domestic comforts; Sheffield-place is still susceptible of useful and ornamental improvements, (alas! how much better might even the last pounds have been laid out!) and if these cares are not sufficient to occupy your leisure, I can trust your restless and enterprising spirit to find new methods to preserve you from the insipidity of repose. But I much fear your discontent and regret at being excluded from that Pandæmonium which we have so often cursed, as long as you were obliged to attend it. The leaders of the party will flatter you with the opinion of their friendship and your own importance; the warmth of

of your temper makes you credulous and unsuspicious; and, like the rest of our species, male and female, you are not absolutely deaf to the voice of praise. Some other place will be suggested, easy, honourable, certain, where nothing is wanted but a man of character and spirit to head a superior interest; the opposition, if any, is contemptible, and the expense cannot be large. You will go down, find almost every circumstance falsely stated, repent that you had engaged yourself, but you cannot desert those friends who are firmly attached to your cause; besides, the money you have already spent would have been thrown away; another thousand will complete the business: deeper and deeper will you plunge, and the last evil will be worse than the first. You see I am a free-spoken counsellor; may I not be a true prophet! Did I consult my own wishes, I should observe to you, that as you are no longer a slave, you might soon be transported, as you seem to desire, to one of the Alpine hills. The purity and calmness of the air is the best calculated to allay the heat of a political fever; the education of the two Princesses might be successfully conducted under your eye and that of my Lady; and if you had resolution to determine on a residence, not a visit, at Lausanne, your worldly affairs might repose themselves after their late fatigues. But you know that *I* am a friend to toleration, and am always disposed to make the largest allowance for the different natures of animals; a lion and a lamb, an eagle and a worm. I am afraid we are too quiet for you; here it would not

not be easy for you to create any business; you have for some time neglected books, and I doubt whether you would not think our suppers and assemblies somewhat trifling and insipid. You are far more difficult than I am; you are in search of information, and you are not content with your company, unless you can derive from them information or extraordinary amusement. For my part, I like to draw knowledge from books, and I am satisfied with polite attention and easy manners. Finally, I am happy to tell, and you will be happy to hear, that this place has in every respect exceeded my best and most sanguine hopes. How often have you said, as often as I expressed any ill-humour against the hurry, the expense, and the precarious condition of my London life, "Ay, that is a nonsensical scheme of retiring to Lausanne that you have got into your head, a pretty fancy; you remember how much you liked it in your youth, but you have now seen more of the world, and if you were to try it again, you would find yourself woefully disappointed." I had it in my head, in my heart, I have tried it, I have not been disappointed, and my knowledge of the world has served only to convince me, that a capital and a crowd may contain much less real society, than the small circle of this gentle retirement. The winter has been longer, but as far as I can learn, less rigorous than in the rest of Europe. The spring is now bursting upon us, and in our own garden it is displayed in all its glory. I already occupy a temporary apartment, and we live in the lower part

of the house; before you receive this we shall be in full possession. We have much to enjoy and something to do, which I take to be the happiest condition of human life. Now for business, the kind of subject which I always undertake with the most reluctance, and leave with the most pleasure.

* * * * * * * * *

Adieu.

And now, my Lady,

Let me approach your gentle, not grimalkin, presence, with deep remorse. You have indirectly been informed of my state of mind and body; (the whole winter I have not had the slightest return of the gout, or any other complaint whatsoever;) you have been apprised, and are now apprised, of my motions, or rather of my perfect and agreeable repose; yet I must confess (and I *feel)* that something of a direct and personal exchange of sentiment has been neglected on my side, though I still *persuade* myself that when I am settled in my new house I shall have more subject, as well as leisure, to write. Such tricks of laziness your active spirit is a stranger to, though Mrs. * * * * complains that she has never had an answer to her last letters. Poor Lady Pembroke! *you* will feel for her! after a cruel alternative of hope and fear, her only daughter, Lady Charlotte, died at *Aix en Provence;* they have persuaded her to come to this place, where she is intimately connected with the Cerjat family. She has taken an agreeable house, about three miles from the town, and lives retired. I have

have seen her; her behaviour is calm, but her affliction ———. I accept with gratitude your friendly proposal of Wedgewood's ware, and should be glad to have it bought and packed, and sent without delay through Germany; and I shall only say, that I wish to have a very complete service for two courses and a dessert, and that our suppers are numerous, frequently fifteen or twenty persons. Adieu. I do not mean this as your letter. You are very good to poor Kitty. With you I do not condole about Coventry.

N° CXCIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, Lausanne, May 28th, 1784.

I BEGIN without preface or apology, as if I had received your letter by the last post. In my own defence I know not what to say; but if I were disposed to recriminate, I might observe that you yourself are not perfectly free from the sin of laziness and procrastination. I have often wondered why we are not fonder of letter-writing. We all delight to talk of ourselves, and it is only in letters, in writing to a friend, that we can enjoy that conversation, not only without reproach or interruption, but with the highest propriety and mutual satisfaction; sure that the person whom we address feels an equal, or at least a strong and lively interest in the consideration of the pleasing subject. On the subject therefore of *self* I will entertain a friend, to whom none of my thoughts or actions,

none of my pains or pleasures, can ever be indifferent. When I first cherished the design of retiring to Lausanne, I was much more apprehensive of wounding your tender attachment, than of offending Lord Sheffield's manly and vehement friendship. In the abolition of the Board of Trade the motives for my retreat became more urgent and forcible; I wished to break loose, yet I delayed above a year before I could take my final resolution; and the letter in which I disclosed it to you cost me one of the most painful struggles of my life. As soon as I had conquered that difficulty, all meaner obstacles fell before me, and in a few weeks I found myself at Lausanne, astonished at my firmness and my success. Perhaps you still blame or still lament the step which I have taken. If on your own account, I can only sympathize with your feelings, the recollection of which often costs me a sigh: if on mine, let me fairly state what I have escaped in England, and what I have found at Lausanne. Recollect the tempests of this winter, how many anxious days I should have passed, how many noisy, turbulent, hot, unwholesome nights, while my political existence, and that of my friends, was at stake; yet these feeble efforts would have been unavailing; I should have lost my seat in parliament, and after the extraordinary expense of another year, I must still have pursued the road of Switzerland, unless I had been tempted by some selfish patron, or by Lord S.'s aspiring spirit, to incur a most inconvenient expense for a new seat; and once more, at the beginning of an opposition,

opposition, to engage in new scenes of business. As to the immediate prospect of any thing like a quiet and profitable retreat, I should not know where to look; my friends are no longer in power. With * * * * * and his party I have no connection; and were he disposed to favour a man of letters, it is difficult to say what he could give, or what I would accept; the reign of pensions and sinecures is at an end, and a commission in the Excise or Customs, the summit of my hopes, would give me income at the expense of leisure and liberty. When I revolve these circumstances in my mind, my only regret, I repeat it again and again, is, that I did not embrace this salutary measure three, five, ten years ago. Thus much I thought it necessary to say, and shall now dismiss this unpleasing part of the subject. For my situation here, health is the first consideration; and on that head your tenderness had conceived some degree of anxiety. I know not whether it has reached you that I had a fit of the gout the day after my arrival. The deed is true, but the cause was accidental; carelessly stepping down a flight of stairs, I sprained my ancle; and my ungenerous enemy instantly took advantage of my weakness. But since my breaking that double chain, I have enjoyed a winter of the most perfect health that I have perhaps ever known, without any mixture of the little flying incommodities which in my best days have sometimes disturbed the tranquillity of my English life. You are not ignorant of Dr. Tissot's reputation, and his merit is even above his

reputation. He assures me, that in his opinion, the moisture of England and Holland is most pernicious; the dry pure air of Switzerland most favourable to a gouty constitution: that experience justifies the theory; and that there are fewer martyrs of that disorder in this, than in any other country in Europe. This winter has every where been most uncommonly severe: and you seem in England to have had your full share of the general hardship: but in this corner, surrounded by the Alps, it has rather been long than rigorous; and its duration stole away our spring, and left us no interval between furs and silks. We now enjoy the genial influence of the climate and the season; and no station was ever more calculated to enjoy them than Deyverdun's house and garden, which are now become my own. You will not expect that the pen should describe, what the pencil would imperfectly delineate. A few circumstances may, however, be mentioned. My library is about the same size with that in Bentinck-street, with this difference, however, that instead of looking on a paved court, twelve feet square, I command a boundless prospect of vale, mountain, and water, from my three windows. My apartment is completed by a spacious light closet, or store-room, with a bed-chamber and dressing-room. Deyverdun's habitation is pleasant and convenient, though less extensive: for our common use we have a very handsome winter apartment of four rooms; and on the ground-floor, two cool saloons for the summer, with a sufficiency, or rather superfluity, of offices, &c.

&c. A terrace, one hundred yards long, extends beyond the front of the house, and leads to a close impenetrable shrubbery; and from thence the circuit of a long and various walk carries me round a meadow and vineyard. The intervals afford abundant supply of fruit, and every sort of vegetables; and if you add, that this villa (which has been much ornamented by my friend) touches the best and most sociable part of the town, you will agree with me, that few persons, either princes or philosophers, enjoy a more desirable residence. Deyverdun, who is proud of his own works, often walks me round, pointing out, with acknowledgment and enthusiasm, the beauties that change with every step and with every variation of light. I share, or at least I sympathize with his pleasure. He appears contented with my progress, and has already told several people, that he does not despair of making me a gardener. Be that as it may, you will be glad to hear that I am, by my own choice, infinitely more in motion, and in the open air, than I ever have been formerly; yet my perfect liberty and leisure leave me many studious hours; and as the circle of our acquaintance retire into the country, I shall be much less engaged in company and diversion. I have seriously resumed the prosecution of my History; each day and each month adds something to the completion of the great work. The progress is slow, the labour continual, and the end remote and uncertain; yet every day brings its amusement, as well as labour; and though I dare not fix a term, even in my own fancy, I

advance, with the pleasing reflection, that the business of publication (should I be detained here so long) must enforce my return to England, and restore me to the best of mothers and friends. In the meanwhile, with health and competence, a full independence of mind and action, a delightful habitation, a true friend, and many pleasant acquaintance; you will allow, that I am rather an object of envy than of pity; and if you were more conversant with the use of the French language, I would seriously propose to you to repose yourself with us in this fine country. My indirect intelligence (on which I sometimes depend with more implicit faith than on the kind dissimulation of your friendship) gives me reason to hope that the last winter has been more favourable to your health than the preceding one. Assure me of it yourself honestly and truly, and you will afford me one of the most lively pleasures.

N° CC.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, June 19th, 1784.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

In this glorious season I frequently give tea and supper to a dozen men and women with ease and reputation, and heartily wish you and my Lady were among them. In this corner of Europe we enjoy, or shall speedily enjoy, (besides threescore English, with Lady Pembroke, and forty French, with

with the Duchess de Sivrac at their head,) M. and Madame Necker, the Abbé Raynal, the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick, Prince Henry of Prussia, perhaps the Duke of Cumberland; yet I am still more content with the humble natives, than with *most* of these illustrious *names*. Adieu. The post is on the wing, and you owe me a long epistle. I am, as usual, in the firm intention of writing next week to my Lady.

N° CCI.

The Same to the Same.

Lausanne, October 18th, 1784.

SINCE my retreat to Lausanne our correspondence has never received so long an interruption; and as I have been equally taciturn with the rest of the English world, it may now be a problem among that sceptical nation, whether the Historian of the Decline and Fall be a living substance or an empty name. So tremendous is the sleepy power of laziness and habit, that the silence of each post operated still more strongly to benumb the hand, and to freeze the *epistolary* ink. How or when I should have naturally awakened, I cannot tell; but the pressure of my affairs and the arrival of your last letter, compel me to remember that you are entrusted with the final amputation of the best limb of my property. The subject is in itself so painful, that I have postponed it, like a child's physic, from day to day; and losing whole mornings, as I walked about my library, in useless regret

regret and impotent resolution, you will be amazed to hear that (after peeping to see if you are all well, and returned from Ireland) I have not yet had the courage to peruse your letter, for fear of meeting with some gloomy intelligence; and I will now finish what I have to say of pecuniary matters, before I know whether its contents will fortify or overthrow my unbiassed sentiments. * * * * * * * To what purpose (will you say) are these tardy and useless repinings? To arraign your manager? No, I am satisfied with the skill and firmness of the pilot, and complain only of the untoward violence of the tempest. To repent of your retreat into Switzerland? No, surely, every subsequent event has tended to make it as necessary as it has proved agreeable. Why then these lamentations? Hear and attend—it is to interest (if possible more strongly) your zeal and friendship, to justify a sort of avarice, a love of money, very foreign to my character, but with which I cling to these last fragments of my fortune. * * * * * * * * * * * * As far as I can judge from the experience of a year, though I find Lausanne much more expensive than I imagined, yet my style of living (and a very handsome style it is) will be brought *nearly* within my ordinary revenues. I wish our poor country could say as much! But it was always my favourite and rational wish, that at the winding up of my affairs I might possess a sum, from one to two thousand pounds, neither buried in land, nor locked up in the funds, but free, light, and

and ready to obey any call of interest, or pleasure, or virtue; to defray any extraordinary expense, support any delay, or remove any obstacle. For the attainment of this object, I trust in your assistance. * * * * * * * *
Thus much for this money transaction; to you I need add no other stimulative, than to say that my ease and comfort very much depend on the success of this plan.

As I thought every man of sense and fortune in Ireland must be satisfied, I did not conceive the cloud so dark as you represent it. I will seriously peruse the new edition of your works; it would become a classic book, if you could find leisure (will you ever find it?) to introduce order and ornament. You must negociate *directly* with Deyverdun; but the state will not hear of parting with their only Reynolds.* I embrace my Lady; let her be angry, provided she be well. Adieu. Yours.

P.S. The care of Ireland may have amused you in the summer; but how do you mean to employ the winter? Do you not cast a longing, lingering look at St. Stephen's chapel? With your fiery spirit, and firm judgment, I almost wish you there; not for your benefit, but for the public. If you resolve to recover your seat, do not listen to any fallacious and infinite projects of interest, contest, return, petition, &c. but limit your expense.

* Alluding to his portrait.

N° CCII.

M. GIBBON *à Madame de* SEVERY.

Lausanne, le 19 Octobre, 1784.

JE vous remercie mille fois, Madame, de votre obligeant souvenir, et de l'intérêt que vous voulez bien conserver pour notre voyage, auquel, hélas! il faudra renoncer dans ce moment. En général le climat de Lausanne a été aussi favorable à ma santé que sa société l'a été à mon cœur et à mon esprit. Cependant la goutte, mon ancien tyran, ne me permet pas d'oublier que j'ai été son esclave. Sans se montrer à découvert elle voltige autour de moi et me fait éprouver des ressentimens, des soupçons et surtout la crainte de me trouver arrêté sous son joug de fer, éloigné de ma maison et dans un mauvais cabaret de Genève. Je vous permets de soupçonner que l'amour de mon cabinet et d'une vie sédentaire ont influé sur ma résolution, pourvu que vous me rendiez la justice de croire que ce motif seul n'auroit point resisté à l'envie de vous accompagner et de cultiver une liaison qui me sera toujours chère et précieuse. Dès mon arrivée à Lausanne j'ai vivement senti vos bontés et celles de Monsieur de Severy, et j'aspire à mériter l'honneur de votre amitié. La dissipation de la ville, quoiqu'un peu affoiblie par les vendanges, va toujours son train; l'on joue, l'on soupe, et l'on attend avec impatience le retour des campagnards que le froid chassera bientôt de leurs bois et de leurs champs, pendant que ce même froid disperse

les

les colonies angloises, qui vont avec les hirondelles et les gruës chercher vers le midi un climat plus doux. Hier nous suivimes à la cité le convoi funèbre de Monsieur le Banneret de Saussure; la république est divisée, la politique a travaillé, dans cet instant le sénat s'assemble pour lui donner un successeur. J'ai l'honneur d'être avec un parfait dévouement, Madame, votre très humble and très obéissant serviteur.

(Signé) GIBBON.

N° CCIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lady* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, October 22d, 1784.

A FEW weeks ago, as I was walking on our terrace with M. Tissot, the celebrated physician; M. Mercier, the author of the *Tableau de Paris;* the Abbé Raynal; Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle Necker; the Abbé de Bourbon, a natural son of Lewis the Fifteenth, the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick, Prince Henry of Prussia, and a dozen Counts, Barons, and extraordinary persons, among whom was a natural son of the Empress of Russia ——Are you satisfied with this list? which I could enlarge and embellish, without departing from truth; and was not the Baron of Sheffield (profound as he is on the subject of the American trade) doubly mistaken with regard to Gibbon and Lausanne? Whenever I used to hint my design of retiring, that illustrious Baron, after a proper effusion

effusion of d——d fools, condescended to observe, that such an obscure nook in Switzerland might please me in the ignorance of youth, but that after tasting for so many years the various society of Paris and London, I should soon be tired with the dull and uniform round of a provincial town. In the winter, Lausanne is indeed reduced to its native powers; but during the summer, it is possibly, after Spa, one of the most favourite places of general resort. The tour of Switzerland, the Alps, and the Glaciers, is become a fashion. Tissot attracts the invalids, especially from France; and a colony of English have taken up the habit of spending their winters at Nice, and their summers in the Pays de Vaud. Such are the splendour and variety of our summer visiters; and *you* will agree with me more readily than the Baron, when I say that this variety, instead of being a merit, is, in my opinion, one of the very few objections to the residence of Lausanne. After the dissipation of the winter, I expected to have enjoyed, with more freedom and solitude, myself, my friend, my books, and this delicious paradise; but my position and character make me here a sort of a public character, and oblige me to see and be seen. However, it is my firm resolution for next summer to assume the independence of a philosopher, and to be visible only to the persons whom I like. On that principle I should not, most assuredly, have avoided the Neckers and Prince Henry. The former have purchased the barony of Copet near Geneva; and as the buildings were very much out

out of repair, they passed this summer at a country-house at the gates of Lausanne. They afford a new example, that persons who have tasted of greatness can seldom return with pleasure to a private station. In the moments when we were alone he conversed with me freely, and I believe truly, on the subject of his administration and fall; and has opened several passages of modern history, which would make a very good figure in *the* American book.* If they spent the summers at the castle of Copet, about nine leagues from hence, a fortnight or three weeks visit would be a pleasant and healthful excursion; but, alas! I fear there is little appearance of its being executed. *Her* health is impaired by the agitation of her mind: instead of returning to Paris, she is ordered to pass the winter in the southern provinces of France, and our last parting was solemn; as I very much doubt whether I shall ever see her again. They have now a very troublesome charge, which you will experience in a few years, the disposal of a Baroness; Mademoiselle† Necker, one of the greatest heiresses in Europe, is now about eighteen, wild, vain, but good-natured, and with a much larger provision of wit than of beauty: what increases their difficulties is their religious obstinacy of marrying her only to a protestant. It would be an excellent opportunity for a young Englishman of a great name and a fair reputation. Prince

* Observations on the Commerce with the American States.

† Now Madame de Staël.

Henry

Henry must be a man of sense; for he took more notice, and expressed more esteem for me, than any body else. He is certainly (without touching his military character) a very lively and entertaining companion. He talked with freedom, and generally with contempt, of most of the princes of Europe; with respect of the Empress of Russia, but never mentioned the name of his brother, except once, when he hinted that it was *he himself* that won the battle of Rosbach. His nephew, and our nephew, the hereditary Prince of Brunswick, is here for his education. Of the English, who live very much as a national colony, you will like to hear of Mrs. Fraser and *one* more. Donna Catherina* pleases every body, by the perfect simplicity of her state of nature. You know she has had resolution to return from England (where she told me she saw you) to Lausanne, for the sake of Miss Bristow, who is in bad health, and in a few days they set off for Nice. *The other* is the Eliza; she passed through Lausanne, in her road from Italy to England; poorly in health, but still adorable, (nay, do not frown!) and I enjoyed some delightful hours by her bed-side. She wrote me a line from Paris, but has not executed her promise of visiting Lausanne in the month of October. My pen has run much faster, and much farther, than I intended on the subject of others; yet, in describing them, I have thrown some light over myself and my situation. A year, a very short one, has now

* The Honourable Mrs. Fraser.

elapsed

elapsed since my arrival at Lausanne; and after a cool review of my sentiments, I can sincerely declare, that I have never, during a single moment, repented of having executed my *absurd* project of retiring to Lausanne. It is needless to dwell on the fatigue, the hurry, the vexation which I must have felt in the narrow and dirty circle of English politics. My present life wants no foil, and shines by its own native light. The chosen part of my library is now arrived, and arranged in a room full as good as that in Bentinck-street, with this difference indeed, that instead of looking on a stone court, twelve feet square, I command, from three windows of plate-glass, an unbounded prospect of many a league of vineyard, of fields, of wood, of lake, and of mountains; a scene which Lord Sheffield will tell you is superior to all you can imagine. The climate, though severe in winter, has perfectly agreed with my constitution, and the year is accomplished without any return of the gout. An excellent house, a good table, a pleasant garden, are no contemptible ingredients in human happiness. The general style of society hits my fancy; I have cultivated a large and agreeable circle of acquaintance, and I am much deceived if I have not laid the foundations of two or three more intimate and valuable connections; but their names would be indifferent, and it would require pages, or rather volumes, to describe their persons and characters. With regard to my standing dish, my domestic friend, I could not be much disappointed, after an intimacy of eight-and-twenty years. His

heart and his head are excellent; he has the warmest attachment for me, he is satisfied that I have the same for him: some slight imperfections must be mutually supported; two bachelors, who have lived so long alone and independent, have their peculiar fancies and humours, and when the mask of form and ceremony is laid aside, every moment in a family-life has not the sweetness of the honey-moon, even between the husbands and wives who have the truest and most tender regard for each other. Should you be very much surprised to hear of my being married? Amazing as it may seem, I do assure you that the event is less improbable than it would have appeared to myself a twelvemonth ago. Deyverdun and I have often agreed, in jest and in earnest, that a house like ours would be regulated, and graced, and enlivened, by an agreeable female companion; but each of us seems desirous that his friend should sacrifice himself for the public good. Since my residence here I have lived much in women's company; and, to your credit be it spoken, I like you the better the more I see of you. Not that I am in love with any particular person. I have discovered about half-a-dozen *wives* who would please me in different ways, and by various merits: one as a mistress (a widow, vastly like *the* Eliza; if she returns I am to bring them together); a second, a lively entertaining acquaintance; a third, a sincere good-natured friend; a fourth, who would represent with grace and dignity at the head of my table and family; a fifth, an excellent economist and

and housekeeper; and a sixth, a very useful nurse. Could I find all these qualities united in a single person, I should dare to make my addresses, and should deserve to be refused. You hint in some of your letters, or rather postscripts, that you consider me as having renounced England, and having fixed myself for the rest of my life in Switzerland, and that you suspect the sincerity of my vague or insidious schemes of purchase or return. To remove, as far as I can, your doubts and suspicions, I will tell you, on that interesting subject, fairly and simply as much as I know of my own intentions. There is little appearance that I shall be suddenly recalled by the offer of a place or pension. I have no claim to the friendship of your young minister, and should he propose a Commissioner of the Customs, or Secretary at Paris, the supposed objects of my low ambition, Adam in Paradise would refuse them with contempt. *Here* therefore I shall certainly live till I have finished the remainder of my History; an arduous work, which does not proceed so fast as I expected, amidst the avocations of society, and miscellaneous study. As soon as it is completed, most probably in three or *four* years, I shall infallibly return to England, about the month of May or June; and the necessary labour of printing with care two or three quarto volumes, will detain me till their publication, in the ensuing spring. Lord Sheffield and yourself will be the loadstone that most forcibly attracts me; and as I shall be a vagabond on the face of the earth, I shall

be the better qualified to domesticate myself with you, both in town and country. Here then, at no very extravagant distance, we have the certainty (if we live) of spending a year together, in the peace and freedom of a friendly intercourse; and a year is no very contemptible portion of this mortal existence. Beyond that period all is dark, but not gloomy. Whether, after the final completion of my History, I shall return to Lausanne, or settle in England, must depend on a thousand events which lie beyond the reach of human foresight, the state of public and private affairs, my own health, the health and life of Deyverdun, the various changes which may have rendered Lausanne more dear, or less agreeable, to me than at present. But without losing ourselves in this distant futurity, which perhaps we may never see, and without giving any positive answer to Maria's parting question, whether I shall be buried in England or Switzerland, let me seriously and earnestly ask you, whether you do not mean to visit me next summer? The defeat at Coventry would, I should think, facilitate the project: since the Baron is no longer detained the whole winter from his domestic affairs, nor is there any attendance on the House that keeps him till Midsummer in dust and dispute. I can send you a pleasant route, through Normandy, Paris, and Lyons, a visit to the Glaciers, and your return down the Rhine, which would be commodiously executed in three or four months, at no very extravagant expense, and would be productive of health and spirits to you,

of

of entertainment to you both, and of instruction to *the* Maria. Without the smallest inconvenience to myself, I am able to lodge yourselves and family, by arranging you in the winter apartment, which in the summer season is not of any use to us. I think you will be satisfied with your habitation, and already see you in your dressing-room; a small pleasant room, with a delightful prospect to the west and south. If poor aunt Kitty (you oblige me beyond expression by your tender care of that excellent woman) if she were only ten years younger, I would desire you to take her with you, but I much fear we shall never meet again. You will not complain of the brevity of this epistle; I expect, in return, a full and fair account of yourself, your thoughts and actions, soul and body, present and future, in the safe, though unreserved, confidence of friendship. The Baron in two words hinted but an indifferent account of your health; you are a fine machine; but as he was absent in Ireland, I hope I understand the cause and the remedy. Next to yourself, I want to hear of the two Baronesses. You must give me a faithful picture (and though a mother you can give it) of their present external and internal forms; for a year has now elapsed, and in *their* lives a year is an age. Adieu. Ever yours.

N° CCIV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, March 13th, 1785.

MY long silence (and it has been long) must not, on this occasion, be imputed to laziness, though that little devil may likewise have been busy. But you cannot forget how many weeks I remained in suspense, expecting every post the final sentence, and not knowing what to say in that passive uncertainty. It is now something more than a fortnight since your last letter, and that of Gosling informed me of the event. I have intended every day to write, and every day I have started back with reluctance and disgust, from the consideration of the wretched subject. Lenborough irrecoverably gone, for three-fourths of its real, at least of its ancient, value; my seat in parliament sunk in the abyss of your cursed politics, and a balance neatly cyphered and summed by Gosling, which shews me a very shallow purse, in which others have a clearer right to dip than myself.

March 21st.

Another week is now elapsed, and though nothing is changed in this too faithful state of my affairs, I feel myself able to encounter them with more spirit and resolution; to look on the future, rather than the past, on the fair, rather than on the foul side

side of the prospect. I shall speak in the confidence of friendship, and while you listen to the more doleful tale of my wants and wishes, you will have the satisfaction of hearing some circumstances in my present situation of a less unpleasing nature. 1. In the first place, I most heartily rejoice in the sale, however unfavourable, of the Bucks estate. Considering the dulness of the times, and the high interest of money, it is not a little to obtain even a tolerable price, and I am sensible how much your patience and industry have been exercised to extort the payment. 2. Your resistance to my Swiss expedition was more friendly than wise. Had I yielded, after eighteen months of suspense and anxiety, I should now, a still poorer man, be driven to embrace the same resource, which has succeeded according to, or even beyond, my most sanguine expectations. I do not pretend to have discovered the terrestrial paradise, which has not been known in this world since the fall of Adam; but I can truly declare, (now the charms of novelty are long since faded,) that I have found the plan of life the best adapted to my temper and my situation. I am now writing to you in a room as good as that in Bentinck-street, which commands the country, the lake, and the mountains, and the opening prospect of the spring. The aforesaid room is furnished without magnificence, but with every conveniency for warmth, ease, and study, and the walls are already covered with more than two thousand volumes, the choice of a chosen library. I have

health, friends, an amusing society, and perfect freedom. A Commissioner of the Excise! the idea makes me sick. If you ask me what I have saved by my retreat to Lausanne, I will fairly tell you (in the two great articles of a carriage and a house in town, both which were indispensable, and are now annihilated, with the difference of clubs, public places, servants wages, &c.) about four hundred pounds, or guineas, a-year; no inconsiderable sum, when it must be annually found as addition to an expense which is somewhat larger than my present revenue. 3. *What is then, you will ask, my present establishment? This* is not by any means a cheap country; and, except in the article of wine, I could give a dinner, or make a coat, perhaps for the same price in London as at Lausanne. My chief advantage arises from the things which I do not want; and in some respects my style of living is enlarged by the increase of my relative importance, an obscure bachelor in England, the master of a considerable house at Lausanne. Here I am expected to return entertainments, to receive ladies, &c. and to perform many duties of society, which, though agreeable enough in themselves, contribute to inflame the housekeeper's bills. But in a quiet, prudent, regular course of life, I think I can support myself with comfort and honour for six or seven hundred pounds a-year, instead of a thousand or eleven hundred in England.

Besides these uncertainties, (uncertain at least as to the time,) I have a sure and honourable supply from

from my own pen. I continue my History with pleasure and assiduity; the way is long and laborious, yet I see the end, and I can almost promise to land in England next September twelvemonth, with a manuscript of the current value of about four thousand pounds, which will afford either a small income or a large capital.

It is the privilege of friendship to make our friend a patient hearer, and active associate in our own affairs; and I have now written five pages on my private affairs, without saying a word either of the public, or of yourself. Of the public I have little to say; I never was a very warm patriot, and I grow every day a citizen of the world. The scramble for power or profit at Westminster or St. James's, and the names of Pitt and Fox, become less interesting to me than those of Cæsar and Pompey. You are not a friend of the young minister, but he was a great favourite on the continent, as he appears to be still; and you must own that the fairness of his character, his eloquence, his application to business, and even his youth, must prepossess at least the ignorant in his favour. Of the merit or defects of his administration I cannot pretend to speak; but I find, from the complaints of some interested persons, that his restraints on the smuggling of tea have already ruined the East India Companies of Antwerp and Sweden, and that even the Dutch will scarcely find it worth their while to send any ships to China. Your Irish friends appear to be more quiet, at least the volunteers and national

congress

congress seem to subside. How far that tranquillity must be purchased on our side, by any pernicious sacrifices, you will best decide; and from some hint in your last letters, I am inclined to think that you are less affected than might be supposed with national or local prejudice. Your introduction I have attentively read; the matter, though most important in itself, is out of the line of my studies and habits, and the subordinate beauties of style you disclaim. Yet I can say with truth, that I never met with more curious and diligent investigation, more strong sense, more liberal spirit, and more cool and impartial temper in the same number of pages. By this time you have probably read Necker's book on the finances. Perhaps for you there is too much French enthusiasm and paint; but in many respects you must have gained a knowledge of his country; and on the whole, you must have been pleased with the picture of a great and benevolent mind. In your attack on Deyverdun for my picture I cannot promise you much success; he seems resolved to maintain his right of possession, and your only chance would be a personal assault. The next summer (how time slips away!) was fixed for your visit to Lausanne. We are prepared at all points to receive *you*, my Lady, and a princess or two, with their train; and if you have a proper contempt for St. Stephen's chapel, you are perfectly free, and at leisure (can you ever be at leisure?) for the summer season. As you are now in a great measure disengaged

engaged from any affairs, you may find time to inform me of your proceedings and your projects. At present I do not even know whether you pass the winter at Sheffield-place or in Downing-street. My Lady revenges herself of my long silence; yet I embrace her and the infants. Adieu. You have deranged the Decline and Fall this morning. I have finished my epistle since dinner, and am now going to a pleasant party and good supper.

N° CCV.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, September 5th, 1785.

EXTRACT from a weekly English paper, September 5th, 1785. "It is reported, but we hope without foundation, that the celebrated Mr. Gibbon, who had retired to Lausanne, in Switzerland, to finish his valuable History, lately died in that city."

The hope of the Newspaper-writer is very handsome and obliging to the Historian; yet there are several weighty reasons which would incline me to believe that the intelligence may be true. *Primo*, It must one day be true; and therefore may very probably be so at present. *Secundo*, We may always depend on the impartiality, accuracy, and veracity of an English newspaper. *Tertio*, which is indeed the strongest argument, we are credibly informed

informed that for a long time past the said celebrated Historian has not written to any of his friends in England; and as that respectable personage had always the reputation of a most exact and regular correspondent, it may be fairly concluded from his silence, that he either is, or ought to be dead. The only objection that I can foresee, is the assurance that Mr. G—— himself read the article as he was eating his breakfast, and laughed very heartily at the mistake of his brother historian; but as he might be desirous of concealing that unpleasant event, we shall not insist on his apparent health and spirits, which might be affected by that subtle politician. He affirms, however, not only that he is alive, and was so on the 5th of September, but that his head, his heart, his stomach, are in the most perfect state, and that the climate of Lausanne has been congenial both to his mind and body. He confesses indeed, that after the last severe winter, the gout, his old enemy, from whom he hoped to have escaped, pursued him to his retreat among the mountains of Helvetia, and that the siege was long, though more languid than in his precedent attacks; after some exercise of patience he began to creep, and gradually to walk; and though he can neither run, nor fly, nor dance, he supports himself with firmness on his two legs, and would willingly kick the impertinent Gazetteer; impertinent enough, though more easily to be forgiven than the insolent *Courier du Bas Rhin*, who about three years ago amused himself

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and his readers with a fictitious epistle from Mr. Gibbon to Dr. Robertson.

Perhaps now you think, Baron, that I shall apologize in humble style for my silence and neglect. But, on the contrary, I do assure you that I am truly provoked at your Lordship's not condescending to be in a passion. I might really have been dead, I might have been sick; if I were neither dead nor sick, I deserved a volley of curses and reproaches for my infernal laziness, and you have defrauded me of my just dues. Had I been silent till Christmas, till doomsday, you would never have thought it worth your while to abuse me. Why then (let me ask in your name) did you not write before? That is indeed a very curious question of natural and moral philosophy. Certainly I am not lazy; elaborate quartos have proved, and will abundantly prove my diligence. I *can* write; spare my modesty on that subject. I like to converse with my friends by pen and tongue, and as soon as I can set myself a-going, I know no moments that run off more pleasantly. I am so well convinced of that truth, and so much ashamed of forcing people that I love to forget me, that I have now resolved to set apart the first hour of each day for the discharge of my obligations; beginning, *comme de raison*, with yourself, and regularly proceeding to Lord Loughborough and the rest. May Heaven give me strength and grace to accomplish this laudable intention! Amen. Certainly (yet I do not know whether it be so certain) I should write much oftener to you if you were not linked in

in business, and if my business had not always been of the unpleasant and mortifying kind. Even now I shove the ugly monster to the end of this epistle, and will confine him to a page by himself, that he may not infect the purer air of our correspondence. Of my situation here I have little new to say, except a very comfortable and singular truth, that my passion for my wife or mistress (Fanny Lausanne) is not palled by satiety and possession of two years. I have seen her in all seasons, and in all humours, and though she is not without faults, they are infinitely overbalanced by her good qualities. Her face is not handsome, but her person, and every thing about her, has admirable grace and beauty: she is of a very cheerful sociable temper; without much learning, she is endowed with taste and good sense; and though not rich, the simplicity of her education makes her a very good economist; she is forbid by her parents to wear any expensive finery; and though her limbs are not much calculated for walking, she has not yet asked me to keep her a coach. Last spring (not to wear the metaphor to rags) I saw Lausanne in a new light during my long fit of the gout, and must boldly declare, that either in health or sickness I find it far more comfortable than your huge metropolis. In London my confinement was sad and solitary; the many forgot my existence when they saw me no longer at Brookes's; and the few, who sometimes cast a thought or an eye on their friend, were detained by business or pleasure, the distance of the way, or the hours of the House of Commons, and

and I was proud and happy if I could prevail on Elmsley to enliven the dulness of the evening. Here the objects are nearer, and much more distinct, and I myself am an object of much larger magnitude. People are not kinder, but they are more idle, and it must be confessed that, of all nations on the globe, the English are the least attentive to the old and infirm; I do not mean in acts of charity, but in the offices of civil life. During three months I have had round my chair a succession of agreeable men and women, who came with a smile, and vanished at a nod; and as soon as it was agreeable I had a constant party at cards, which was sometimes dismissed to their respective homes, and sometimes detained by Deyverdun to supper, without the least trouble or inconvenience to myself. In a word, my plan has most completely answered; and I solemnly protest, after two years trial, that I have never in a single moment repented of my transmigration. The only disagreeable circumstance is the increase of a race of animals with which this country has been long infested, and who are said to come from an island in the Northern Ocean. I am told, but it seems incredible, that upwards of forty thousand English, masters and servants, are now absent on the continent; and I am sure we have our full proportion, both in town and country, from the month of June to that of October. The occupations of the closet, indifferent health, want of horses, in some measure plead my excuse; yet I do too much to please myself, and probably too little to satisfy my countrymen.

trymen. What is still more unlucky is, that a part of the colony of this present year are really good company, people one knows, &c.; the Astons, Hales, Hampdens, Trevors, Lady Clarges and Miss Carter, Lord Northington, &c. I have seen Trevor several times, who talks of you, and seems to be a more exact correspondent than myself. *His wife* is much improved by her diplomatic life, and shines in every company as a woman of fashion and elegance. But those who have repaid me for the rest, were Lord and Lady Spencer. I saw them almost every day, at my house or their own, during their stay of a month; for they were hastening to Italy, that they might return to London next February. He is a valuable man, and where he is familiar, a pleasant companion; she a charming woman, who, with sense and spirit, has the simplicity and playfulness of a child. You are not ignorant of her talents, of which she has left me an agreeable specimen, a drawing of the Historic Muse, sitting in a thoughtful posture to compose. So much of Self and Co. let us now talk a little of your house and your two countries. Does my Lady ever join in the abuse which I have merited from you? Is she satisfied with her own behaviour, her unpardonable silence, to one of the prettiest, most obliging, most entertaining, most, &c. epistles that ever was penned since the epistles of * * * * * *? Will she not *mew* one word of reply? I want some account of her spirits, health, amusements, of the elegant accomplishments of Maria, and the opening graces of Louisa; of yourself I wish to have some

of

of those details which she is most likely to transmit. Are you patient in your exclusion from the House? Are you satisfied with legislating with your pen? Do you pass the whole winter in town? Have you resumed the pursuits of farming, &c.? What new connections, public or private, have you formed? A tour to the continent would be the best medicine for the shattered nerves of a soldier and politician. By this expression you will perceive that your letter to Deyverdun is received; it landed last post, after I had already written the two first pages of this composition. On the whole my friend was pleased and flattered; but instead of surrendering, or capitulating, he seems to be making preparations for an obstinate defence. He already talks of the right of possession,* of the duties of a good citizen, of a *writ ne exeat regnum*, and of a vote of the Two Hundred, that whosoever shall, directly or indirectly, &c. is an enemy to his country. Between you be the strife, while I sit with my scales in my hand, like Jupiter on Mount Ida. I begin to view with the same indifference the combat of Achilles Pitt, and Hector Fox; for such, as it should now seem, must be the comparison of the two warriors. * * * * * * *
At this distance I am much less angry with bills, taxes, and propositions, than I am pleased with Pitt for making a friend and a deserving man happy, for releasing Batt from the shackles of the law, and for enhancing the gift of a secure and honourable

* His portrait, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

competency, by the handsome manner in which it was conferred. This I understand to be the case, from the unsuspicious evidence of Lord Northington and Chief Baron Skinner; and if I can find time, *(resolution,)* I will send him a hearty congratulation; if I fail, you may at least communicate my intentions. Of Ireland I know nothing, and while I am writing the Decline of a great Empire, I have not leisure to attend to the affairs of a remote and petty province. I see that your friend Foster has been hooted by the mob, and unanimously chosen Speaker of the House of Commons. How could Pitt expose himself to the disgrace of withdrawing his propositions after a public attempt? Have Ministers no way of computing beforehand the sense or nonsense of an Irish Parliament? I am quite in the dark; your pamphlet, or book, would probably have opened my eyes; but, whatever may have been the reason, I give you *my word of honour*, that I have never seen nor heard of it. Here we are much more engaged with continental politics. In general we hate the Emperor, as the enemy of peace, without daring to make war. The old lion of Prussia acts a much more glorious part, as the champion of public tranquillity, and the independence of the German States.

And now for the bitter and nauseous pill of pecuniary business, upon which I shall be as concise as possible in the two articles of my discourse, land and money. * * * * * * *

It is impossible to hate more than I do this odious necessity

necessity of owing, borrowing, anticipating, and I look forwards with impatience to the happy period when the supplies will always be raised within the year, with a decent and useful surplus in the treasury. I now trust to the conclusion of my History, and it will hasten and secure the principal comforts of my life. You will believe I am not lazy; yet I fear the term is somewhat more distant than I thought. My long gout lost me three months in the spring; in every great work unforeseen dangers, and difficulties, and delays will arise; and I should be rather sorry than surprised if next autumn was postponed to the ensuing spring. If my Lady (a good creature) should write to Mrs. Porten, she may convey news of my life and health, without saying any thing of this *possible* delay. Adieu. I embrace, &c.

Lausanne, October 1st, 1785.

N° CCVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, January 17th, 1786.

HEAR, all ye nations! An epistle from Sheffield-place, received the seventeenth of January, is answered the same day; and to say the truth, this method, which is the best, is at the same time the most easy and pleasant. Yet I do not allow that on the last past silence and delay you have any more reason to swear than myself. Our letters crossed each other, our claims are equal, and if

both had been stiffly maintained, our mutual silence must have continued till the day of judgment. The balance was doubtless in my favour, if you recollect the length, the fulness, the variety of pleasant and instructive matter of my last dispatch. Even at present, of myself, my occupations, my designs, I have little or nothing to add; and can only speak dryly and briefly to very dry and disagreeable business. * * * * *

But we shall both agree, that the true criminal is my Lady; and though I do suppose that a letter is on the road, which will make some amends, her obstinate, contumacious, dilatory silence, so many months or years since my valuable letter, is worthy a royal tigress. * * * * * * *

Notwithstanding your gloomy politicians, I do love the funds: and were the next war to reduce them to half, the remainder would be a better and pleasanter property, than a similar value in your dirty acres.

N° CCVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, May 10th, 1786.

BY the difference, I suppose, of the posts of France and Germany, Sir Stanier's letter, though first written, is still on the road, and your's, which I received yesterday morning, brought me the first account of poor Mrs. Porten's departure. There are few events that could afflict me more deeply,

and

and I have been ever since in a state of mind more deserving of your pity than of your reproaches. I certainly am not ignorant that we have nothing better to wish for ourselves than the fate of that best-humoured woman, as you very justly style her; a good understanding and an excellent heart, with health, spirits, and a competency, to live in the midst of her friends till the age of fourscore, and then to shut her eyes without pain or remorse. Death can have deprived her only of some years of weakness, perhaps of misery; and for myself, it is surely less painful to lose her at present, than to find her on my visit to England next year sinking under the weight of age and infirmities, and perhaps forgetful of herself and of the persons once the dearest to her. All this is perfectly true: but all these reflections will not dispel a thousand sad and tender remembrances that rush upon my mind. To her care I am indebted in earliest infancy for the preservation of my life and health. I was a puny child, neglected by my mother, starved by my nurse, and of whose being very little care or expectation was entertained; without her maternal vigilance I should either have been in my grave, or imperfectly lived a crooked ricketty monster, a burden to myself and others. To her instructions I owe the first rudiments of knowledge, the first exercise of reason, and a taste for books, which is still the pleasure and glory of my life; and though she taught me neither language nor science, she was certainly the most useful preceptor I ever had. As I grew up, an intercourse of

thirty years endeared her to me, as the faithful friend and the agreeable companion. You have seen with what freedom and confidence we lived together, and have often admired her character and conversation, which could alike please the young and the old. All this is now lost, finally, irrecoverably lost! I will agree with my Lady, that the immortality of the soul is at some times a very comfortable doctrine. A thousand thanks to her for her constant kind attention to that poor woman who is no more. I wish I had as much to applaud, and as little to reproach, in my own behaviour towards Mrs. Porten since I left England; and when I reflect that my letters would have soothed and comforted her decline, I feel more deeply than I can express, the real neglect, and seeming indifference, of my silence. To delay a letter from the Wednesday to the Saturday, and then from the Saturday to the Wednesday, appears a very slight offence; yet in the repetition of such delay, weeks, months, and years will elapse, till the omission may become irretrievable, and the consequence mischievous or fatal. After a long lethargy, I had roused myself last week, and wrote to the three old Ladies, my letter for Mrs. Porten went away last post, Saturday night, and yours did not arrive till Monday morning. Sir Stanier will probably open it, and read the true picture of my sentiments for a friend who, when I wrote, was already extinct. There is something sad and awful in the thought, yet, on the whole, I am not sorry that even this tardy epistle preceded my know-

knowledge of her death: but it did not precede (you will observe) the information of her dangerous and declining state, which I conveyed in my last letter, and her anxious concern that she should never see or *hear* from me again. This idea, and the hard thoughts which you must entertain of me, press so much on my mind, that I must frankly acknowledge a strange inexcusable supineness, on which I desire you would make no comment, and which in some measure may account for my delays in corresponding with you. The unpleasant nature of business, and the apprehension of finding something disagreeable, tempted me to postpone from day to day, not only the answering, but even the opening, your penultimate epistle; and when I received your last, yesterday morning, the seal of the former was still unbroken. Oblige me so far as to make no reflections; my own may be of service to me hereafter. Thus far (except the last sentence) I have run on with a sort of melancholy pleasure, and find my heart much relieved by unfolding it to a friend. And the subject so strongly holds me, so much disqualifies me for other discourse, either serious or pleasant, that here I would willingly stop, and reserve all miscellaneous matter for a second volunteer epistle. But we both know how frail are promises, how dangerous are delays, and there are some pecuniary objects on which I think it necessary to give you an immediate, though now tardy, explanation. * * * * * * * * * * *

Adieu.

N° CCVIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Sir* STANIER PORTEN, Kensington Palace.

MY DEAR SIR, Lausanne, May 12th, 1786.

THE melancholy event which you have communicated, in your last obliging letter of the twenty-fourth of April, might indeed be too naturally feared and expected. If we consult our reason, we can wish nothing better for ourselves than the lot of that dear and valuable friend whom we have now lost.* A warm heart, a strong and clear understanding, a most invaluable happiness of temper, which shewed her the agreeable or comfortable side of every object, and every situation; an easy competency, the reward of her own attention; private friendship, general esteem, a mature age, and a placid decline. But these rational motives of consolation are insufficient to check a thousand soft and sad remembrances that rush into my mind; the intimacy of a whole life; of mine, at least, from the earliest dawn of my infancy; the maternal and assiduous care of my health, and afterwards of my mind; the freedom and frequency of our conversations; the regret which I felt in our last separation, and the hope, however faint and precarious, of seeing her again. Time alone can reconcile us to this irreparable loss, and to his healing power I must recommend your grief, as well

* His aunt, Mrs. Catherine Porten.

as

as my own. I sincerely applaud her very proper and natural disposal of her effects, and am proud of the pre-eminence which she has allowed me in a list of dear and worthy relations.

I am too full of a single idea to expatiate, as I should otherwise do, on indifferent matters; yet not totally indifferent to my friends, since they relate to my present situation. My health is in general perfectly good, and the only drawbacks some occasional visits of the gout, which abate, however, in strength, and are grown, I think, less frequent and lasting. The life which I lead is temperate and tranquil, and the distemper itself is not common in the purity and dryness of the climate. After a long trial, I can now approve my own choice of retiring to Switzerland. I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours.

N° CCIX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Hon. Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, July 22d, 1786.

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* * * SINCE I have another page, and some leisure moments, we may as well employ it in friendly converse; the more so, as the great letter to which I alluded is wonderfully precarious and uncertain: the more so likewise, as our correspondence for some time past has been of an abrupt and disagreeable cast. Let us first talk of Sheffield's works: they are of two sorts: *Primo*, Two nymphs,

nymphs, whom I much desire to see, the sprightly Maria and the gentle Louisa. I perfectly represent them both in the eye of fancy; each of them accomplished according to her age and character, yet totally different in their external and internal forms. *Secundo*, Three pamphlets; pamphlets! I cry you mercy; three weighty treatises, almost as useful as an inquiry into the state of the primitive church. And here let me justify, if I have not before, my silence on a subject which we authors do not easily forgive. The first, whose first editions had seen the light before I left England, followed me here in a more complete condition; and that Treatise on the American Trade has been read, judged, approved, and reported. The second, on Ireland, I have seen by accident the copy you sent to Mr. Trevor, who passed last summer (eighty-five) here. The third, and in my present situation the most interesting, on the French Commerce,* I have not yet seen by any means whatsoever, and you who know what orders you have given to Elmsley or others, will best discern on whom should be laid the fault and the blame. But to return to your books, all that I have seen must do you honour, and might do the public service: you are above the trifling decorations of style; but your sense is strong, your views impartial, and your industry laudable. I find that your American Tract is just translated into German. Do you still

* Lord Sheffield did not *publish* his observations on the French Treaty and Commerce.

cor-

correspond with * * * *? If he could establish a beneficial intercourse between the two first nations in the world, I would excuse him some little political tergiversation. At some distance of time and place, those domestic squabbles lose much of their importance; and though I should not forgive him any breach of private friendship or confidence, I cannot much blame him if he chose rather to serve his family and his country, than to persevere in a hopeless, and, as I suspect, an unpopular opposition. You have never told me clearly and correctly how you support your inactive retreat from the House of Commons; whether you have resumed your long forgotten taste for rural pleasures, and whether you have never cast a look towards Coventry, or some other borough equally pure and respectable. In the short space that is left I will only repeat more distinctly, that in the present contemplation of my work, June or July of next year is the earliest term at which I can hope to see England. Do not be childish or passionate; trust me, I wish to appear in England; but it must be with my book in my hand: and a book takes more time in making than a pudding. Adieu. Will my Lady never write?

N° CCX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Hon. Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, January 20th, 1787.

AFTER some sallies of wrath, you seem at length to have subsided in sullen silence, and I must confess

fess not totally without reason. Yet if your mind be still open to truth, you will confess that I am not so black as I appear. 1. Your Lordship has shewn much less activity and eloquence than formerly, and your last letter was an answer to mine, which I had expected some time with impatience. Bad examples are dangerous to young people. 2. Formerly I have neglected answering your epistles on essential, though unpleasant, business; and the *res-publica* or *privata* may have suffered by my neglect. Supposing therefore we had no transactions, why should I write so often? To exchange sentimental compliments, or to relate the various and important transactions of the republic of Lausanne. As long as I do not inform you of my death, you have good grounds to believe me alive and well. You have a general, and will soon have a more particular idea of my system and arrangement here. One day glides away after another in tranquil uniformity. Every object must have sides and moments less luminous than others; but, upon the whole, the life and the place which I have chosen are most happily adapted to my character and circumstances; and I can now repeat, at the end of three years, what I soon and sincerely affirmed, that never, in a single instant, have I repented of my scheme of retirement to Lausanne; a retirement which was judged by my best and wisest friend a project little short of insanity. The place, the people, the climate, have answered or exceeded my warmest expectations. And though I truly rejoice in my approaching visit to England, Mr. Pitt,

Pitt, were he your friend and mine, would not find it an easy task to prevent my return. 3. And now let me add a third reason, which often diverted me from writing; namely, my impatience to see you this next summer. I am building a great book, which, besides the three stories already exposed to the public eye, will have three stories more before we reach the roof and battlements. You too have built or altered a great Gothic castle with baronial battlements. Did you finish it within the time you intended? As that time drew near, did you not find a thousand nameless and unexpected works that must be performed; each of them calling for a portion of time and labour? and had you not despised, nobly despised, the minute diligence of finishing, fitting up, and furnishing the apartments, you would have discovered a new train of indispensable business. Such, at least, has been my case. A long while ago, when I contemplated the distant prospect of my work, I gave you and myself some hopes of landing in England last autumn; but, alas! when autumn grew near, hills began to rise on hills, Alps on Alps, and I found my journey far more tedious and toilsome than I had imagined. When I look back on the length of the undertaking, and the variety of materials, I cannot accuse, or suffer myself to be accused of idleness; yet it appeared that unless I doubled my diligence, another year, and perhaps more, would elapse before I could embark with my complete manuscript. Under these circumstances I took, and am still executing, a bold and meritorious resolution.

lution. The mornings in winter, and in a country of early dinners, are very concise; to them, my usual period of study, I now frequently add the evenings, renounce cards and society, refuse the most agreeable evenings, or perhaps make my appearance at a late supper. By this extraordinary industry, which I never practised before, and to which I hope never to be again reduced, I see the last part of my History growing apace under my hands; all my materials are collected and arranged; I can exactly compute, by the square foot, or the square page, all that remains to be done; and after concluding text and notes, after a general review of my time and my ground, I now can decisively ascertain the final period of the Decline and Fall, and can boldly promise that I will dine with you at Sheffield-place in the month of August, or perhaps of July, in the present year; within less than a twelvemonth of the term which I had loosely and originally fixed; and perhaps it would not be easy to find a work of that size and importance in which the workman has so tolerably kept his word with himself and the public. But in this situation, oppressed with this particular object, and stealing every hour from my amusement, to the fatigue of the pen, and the eyes, you will conceive, or you might conceive, how little stomach I have for the epistolary style: and that instead of idle, though friendly, correspondence, I think it far more agreeable to employ my time in the effectual measures that may hasten and exhilarate our personal interview. About a month ago I had a voluntary, and

not

not unpleasing, epistle from Cadell; he informs me that he is going to print a new octavo edition, the former being exhausted, and that the public expect with impatience the conclusion of that excellent work, whose reputation increases every day, &c. I answered him by the return of the post, to inform him of the period and extent of my labours, and to express a reasonable hope that he would set the same value on the three last as he had done on the three former volumes. Should we conclude in this easy manner a transaction so honourable to the author and bookseller, my way is clear and open before me; in pecuniary matters I think I am assured for the rest of my life of never troubling my friends, or being troubled myself; a state to which I aspire, and which I indeed deserve, if not by my management, at least by my moderation.

In your last, you talk more of the French treaty than of yourself and your wife and family; a true English *quid nunc!* For my part, in this remote, inland, neutral country, you will suppose, that after a slight glance on the papers, I have neither had the means nor the inclination to think very deeply about it. As a citizen of the world, a character to which I am every day rising or sinking, I must rejoice in every agreement that diminishes the separation between neighbouring countries, which softens their prejudices, unites their interests and industry, and renders their future hostilities less frequent and less implacable. With regard to the present treaty, I hope both nations are gainers;

gainers; since otherwise it cannot be lasting; and such double mutual gain is surely possible in fair trade, though it could not easily happen in the mischievous amusements of war and gaming. * * * * * What a delightful hand have these great statesmen made of it since my departure! without power, and, as far as I can see, without hope. When we meet I shall advise you to digest all your political and commercial knowledge, (England, Ireland, France, America,) and, with some attention to style and order, to make the whole a classic book, which may preserve your name and benefit your country. I know not whether you have seen Sir Henry Clinton since his return: he passed a day with me, and seemed pleased with my reception and place. We talked over you and the American war. I embrace the *silent my Lady*, and the two honourable Misses, whom I sigh to behold and admire. Adieu. Ever yours.

Though I can part with land, you find I cannot part with books: the remainder of my library has so long embarrassed your room, that it may now await my presence and final judgment. Has my Lady read a novel intitled Caroline de Lichfield, of our home manufacture? I may say of ours, since Deyverdun and myself were the judges and patrons of the manuscript. The author, who is since married a second time, (Madame de Crousaz, now Montolieu,) is a charming woman. I was in some danger.

N° CCXI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, June 2d, 1787.

I BEGIN to discover that if I wait till I could achieve a just and satisfactory epistle, equally pleasant and instructive, you would have a poor chance of hearing from me. I will therefore content myself with a simple answer to a question, which (I love to believe) you repeat with some impatience: "When may we expect you in England?" My great building is, as it were, completed, and some slight ornaments, the painting and glazing of the last finished rooms may be dispatched without inconvenience in the autumnal residence of Sheffield-Place. It is therefore my sincere and peremptory intention to depart from Lausanne about the twentieth of July, and to find myself (*me trouver*) in London on or before the glorious first of August. I know of nothing that can prevent it but a fit of the gout, the capricious tyrant, who obeys no laws either of time or place; and so unfortunately are we circumstanced, that such a fit, if it came late and lasted long, would effectually disable me from coming till next spring; since thereby I should lose the season, the monsoon, for the impression of three quarto volumes, which will require nine months, (a regular parturition,) and cannot advantageously appear after the beginning or middle of May. At the same time do not be apprehensive that I mean to play you a dog's trick.

From a thousand motives it is my wish to come over this year; the desire of seeing you, and the *silent sullen* my Lady; the family arrangements, discharge of servants, which I have already made; the strong wish of settling my three youngest children in a manner honourable to them and beneficial to their parents. Much miscellaneous matter rises to my pen, but I will not be tempted to turn the leaf. Expect me therefore at Sheffield-Place, with strong probability, about the fifteenth of August. Adieu. Yours.

N° CCXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Lausanne, July 21st, 1787.

THE twentieth of July is past, and I am still at Lausanne; but the march of heavy bodies, such as armies and historians, can seldom be foreseen or fixed to a precise day. Some particular reasons have engaged me to allow myself another week; and the day of my departure is now (*I believe*) determined for Sunday the twenty-ninth instant. You know the road and the distance. I am no rapid English traveller, and my servant is not accustomed to ride post. I was never fond of deeds of darkness, and if the weather be hot, we must repose in the middle of the day. Yet the roads are in general good: between sun and sun the interval is long; and, barring the accidents of winds and waves, I think it possible to reach London in ten

or

or twelve days; *viz.* on or before the ninth of August. With your active spirit, you will scarce understand how I can look on this easy journey with some degree of reluctance and apprehension; but after a tranquil sedentary life of four years, (having lain but a single night out of my own bed,) I see mountains and monsters in the way; and so happy do I feel myself *at home*, that nothing but the strongest calls of friendship and interest could drag me from hence.

N° CCXIII.

The Same to the Same.

Adelphi Hotel, August 8th, 1787.

INTELLIGENCE EXTRAORDINARY. This day (August the seventh) the celebrated E. G. arrived with a numerous retinue (one servant). We hear that he has brought over from Lausanne the remainder of his History for immediate publication. The post had left town before my arrival. I am pleased, but indeed astonished, to find myself in London, after a journey of six hundred miles, and hardly yet conceive how I had resolution to undertake it. I find myself not a little fatigued, and have devoted this hot day to privacy and repose, without having seen any body except Cadell and Elmsley, and my neighbour Batt, whose civility amounts to kindness and real friendship. But you may depend on it, that instead of sauntering in town, or giving way to every temptation, I will dispatch my necessary work, and hasten with impatience to the

groves of Sheffield-Place; a project somewhat more rational than the hasty turbulent visit which your vigour had imagined. If you come up to quicken my diligence we shall meet the sooner; but I see no appearance of my leaving town before the end of next week. I embrace, &c. Adieu.

N° CCXIV.

M. GIBBON *à Madame de* SEVERY.

Sheffield-Place, ce 1 Septembre, 1787.

NOTRE ami Deyverdun vous aura déjà communiqué, Madame, les premières nouvelles de mon voyage, et de mon arrivée. En quittant Lausanne j'éprouvois les sentimens d'un homme qui s'arrache à sa patrie. Depuis quatre ans j'y goutois les douceurs d'une vie tranquille et sédentaire: le bruit, le mouvement, les fatigues du voyage m'effrayoient d'avance; j'étois content et heureux dans ma petite enceinte, et en franchissant les premières montagnes je voyois avec une sorte de surprise et d'épouvante le monde qui s'agrandissoit devant moi. Ces craintes puériles étoient fortifiées par des regrets plus dignes d'un homme raisonnable. Je perdois de vue cette position unique sur la terre, ce lac, ces montagnes, ces riants côteaux; ce tableau charmant qui paroît toujours nouveau aux yeux mêmes accoutumés dès leur enfance à le voir. Je laissois ma bibliothèque, la terrasse, mon berceau, une maison riante et tous ces petits objets de commodité journalière que l'habitude nous rend si nécessaires, et dont l'absence nous fait à tous momens sentir la privation. Sur tous

tous les pays de l'Europe, j'avois choisi pour ma retraite, le Pays de Vaud, et jamais je ne me suis repenti un seul instant de ce choix.

La tranquillité du gouvernement, qui vaut mieux peut-être que notre liberté orageuse, un peuple aimable, une société douce et facile, la politesse réunie avec la simplicité des mœurs, voilà les objets que j'ai cherchés à Lausanne, que j'y ai trouvés, et que j'aurois difficilement trouvés ailleurs. Je comptois avec raison sur un ami de trente ans qui ne me laisse rien à désirer, qu'une santé mieux affermie, et parmi une foule de connoissances agréables, je me flatte d'avoir acquis, et je ne crains pas de perdre, l'amitié d'une famille entière dont chaque individu (je parle en simple historien) possède le caractère, le genre de mérite, et les talens qui conviennent à son age, et à sa position: voilà mes richesses. Je me rappelle souvent avec reconnoissance, et avec plaisir, le bonheur que j'ai goûté, et l'accueil que j'ai reçu à Lausanne, et je ne pourrois me consoler de notre séparation, si je ne conservois pas l'espérance, disons mieux le dessein ferme et inébranlable, de revoir au printems prochain ma patrie d'adoption.

Mon voyage s'est passé sans événemens. Enfermé seul dans une boëte roulante, je jouïssois doucement d'un tableau mouvant qui se varioit à chaque instant, et au milieu de mes ideés et de mes livres, les journées s'écouloient sans ennui. Un seul trait intéressant que j'ai recueilli en traversant la Bourgogne pourra grossir le volume des causes célèbres de ces méprises fatales que les tribunaux de France nous ont si souvent fournies. En chan-

geant de chevaux je prêtois l'oreille à l'entretien du maître de poste et d'un abbé qui raisonnoient sur une affaire laquelle occupoit dans ce moment-là tous les esprits: une justice présidiale avoit condamné deux accusés, l'un à la potence, l'autre aux galères: ils en appellèrent au parlement de Dijon; et ce tribunal suprême afin de ne pas copier trop servilement l'arrêt d'une cour inférieure, s'avisa de laisser toujours subsister les deux jugemens mais de faire changer de rôle aux deux acteurs: le pendu mourut comme vous le sentez bien, le forçat aussi: il s'est trouvé depuis, que tous les deux étoient innocens. Des amis de l'humanité se sont pourvus devant le conseil, qui vient de renvoyer l'affaire au même parlement de Dijon, et cette assemblée délibère actuellement s'il convient à sa gloire de réhabiliter la mémoire de ces deux infortunés qu'elle a assassinés du glaive de la justice.

J'ai traversé la mer par un calme assez ennuyeux, et à Londres, dans cette saison, je n'ai trouvé qu'une vaste solitude. Après avoir expédié les affaires les plus pressantes qui m'appelloient dans cette capitale, je me suis rendu au Château de mon ami Lord Sheffield, séjour du repos, et de l'amitié. Depuis trois ou quatre semaines j'y mène une vie des plus tranquilles: mon goût et mes forces ne s'accordent guères avec les exercices champêtres. Je souffre quelques visites du voisinage, sans les rendre trop exactement, et je ne me suis permis qu'une seule course aux eaux de Tunbridge à six lieues d'ici: l'endroit, très agréable par lui même, étoit rempli de fort bonne compagnie: Madame Trevor,

Trevor et Lady Clarges venoient de le quitter. Chemin faisant j'y ai renouvellé beaucoup de connoissances, mais l'objet de cette course étoit mon ancien ami Lord North, avec qui j'ai passé la journée entière: je l'ai trouvé aveugle mais gai, et assez consolé de son malheur au milieu de sa famille. Le public, quoique partagé sur le mérite de ce ministre, se réunit pour aimer, et pour plaindre l'homme honnête et intéressant. Je pourrois vous parler, Madame, de nos affaires politiques et de la résolution unanime du ministère et de la nation de soutenir le Stathouder par les négociations ou par les armes: mais j'aime mieux vous entretenir d'un jeune homme qui nous intéresse bien plus que toutes les puissances de l'Europe. J'espère que vous conservez toujours, Monsieur de Severy et vous, l'intention favorable de m'envoyer notre fils (si vous voulez bien me permettre de lui donner ce nom.)

Plus j'y pense, (et j'y ai beaucoup pensé,) et plus je suis convaincu que ce voyage sera utile pour lui et sans danger, qu'il sera charmé d'avoir appris la langue et d'avoir vu le pays, qu'il se developpera en tout sens, qu'il formera des liaisons, et qu'il retournera à Lausanne plus propre aux *grandes aventures*, ou plus content de vivre tranquille au sein de son pays. Je me repens déjà de ne l'avoir pas emmené avec moi, et lorsque je songe au tems qu'il lui faudra pour acquérir une nouvelle langue, il me semble qu'il vaudroit mieux le faire partir sans délai, et lui accorder trois ou quatre mois de retraite à la campagne avant son début dans la capitale.

En raisonnant avec Lord Sheffield sur le choix d'un endroit convenable, il s'en est présenté un tel que nous pourrions le désirer, à deux lieues seulement de son château: je pourrai voir très souvent notre élève, il y sera reçu avec plaisir par Lord Sheffield: je lui promets la chasse au renard, au lièvre et au fusil; s'il peut se passer de domestique en route il lui sera beaucoup plus avantageux de prendre un Anglois sur les lieux. Le grand chemin de Pontarlier à Calais est assez frayé, et les occasions en poste ou avec un voiturier doivent se présenter très souvent, mais le pas d'un voiturier seroit bien lent pour notre impatience. A son arrivée à Londres Wilhelm s'adressera à *Elmsley libraire, opposite to Southampton-street in the Strand,* qui dirigera ses premières démarches, et le fera partir (si je ne suis pas en ville) pour le château de Sheffield, où tout est déjà prevenu en sa faveur. Mais je suis presque tenté de vous proposer une autre route qui n'a d'autre inconvénient qu'une plus longue traversée de mer, ce seroit de suivre par les voitures publiques le grand chemin de Genève, Lyon, Paris, (sans s'y arrêter,) et Dieppe, de passer dans le paquebot de Dieppe à Brighthelmstone, où il s'adresseroit à Monsieur S——, marchand très connu, qui le fera conduire tout de suite à Sheffield distant de six lieues seulement de ce port. Quelque parti que vous preniez, j'ose vous supplier de vouloir bien me le communiquer sur le champ: il me semble que nous n'avons point de tems à perdre; je ferai une petite course à Londres le mois prochain, mais je pourrai l'avancer ou la retarder de quelques jours

suivant

suivant vos arrangemens. Rappellez moi au souvenir du *petit troupeau* de Lausanne: j'attends avec impatience des nouvelles de Deyverdun. J'embrasse Monsieur de Severy et Wilhelm, sans oser prendre cette liberté avec Angletine. Adieu, Madame, le papier me manque pour les formules, mais je les crois assez superflues.

N° CCXV.

M. GIBBON *à M. de* SEVERY.

Sheffield-Place, ce 4 Novembre, 1787.

JE ne saurois, Monsieur, laisser partir les dépêches de notre fils sans vous dire avec combien de plaisir je l'ai embrassé et quelle joye j'ai ressentie à voir réaliser des projets que nous avions formés dans mon petit pavillon à Lausanne. Il est arrivé en parfaite santé, très content ce me semble des premiers pas qu'il a faits dans cette grande entreprise, et je me persuade de plus en plus qu'elle lui réussira à tous égards. Son début dans le petit cercle de Sheffield-Place a été très heureux. Il plait déjà à tout le monde, depuis Milord, jusqu'au petit chien de Milady; et si les premières politesses sont pour mon compte, les suivantes à l'infini seront pour lui: nous allons bientôt l'établir dans son village. Milord Sheffield le garderoit volontiers au château, mais s'il restoit avec nous il n'apprendroit jamais l'anglois, et il faut savoir sacrifier l'agréable à l'utile. Je lui annonce quelques semaines d'ennui et qu'il n'est pas possible de lui sauver: nous tâcherons

tâcherons de les adoucir par les petites ressources de la musique et de la chasse, mais il ne faut pas que le clavecin ni le chien parlent françois—il m'a montré la lettre que vous lui avez donnée pour votre banquier, lettre très bonne assurément, mais très inutile: permettez-moi de me charger uniquement de ce petit détail, et à mon retour à Lausanne les deux pères compteront ensemble. Il sera bon cependant, qu'il vous indique de tems en tems l'argent qu'il me demande, afin que vous puissiez rallentir son allure si elle se trouve un peu trop vive: je lui vois les dispositions les plus sages, et les plus modestes, mais dans la navigation périlleuse des grandes villes il y a bien des écueils. Jusqu'à présent j'ai mené la vie la plus tranquille, mais dans une quinzaine de jours, à la rentrée du parlement, j'irai passer quelques jours à Londres, et ensuite à Bath; je reviendrai ici avant les fêtes, et nous ne serons solidement établis en ville que vers le milieu du mois de Janvier. Soyez persuadé que non seulement dans les bois de Sheffield, mais au milieu de la dissipation de Londres je penserai toujours à Lausanne, et à mon retour. Pour vous, après avoir couru le bal et la comédie à R. . . . . vous retournerez à Lausanne au mois de Décembre, très fiers d'avoir passé l'automne à la campagne.

Adieu, Monsieur, je n'ajoute rien pour Madame et Mademoiselle de Severy: elles connoissent mes sentimens, et toute votre maison n'a qu'une ame et un esprit.

N°

N° CCXVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Monday Afternoon, 1787.

I PRECIPITATE! I inconvenience! Alas! alas! I am a poor miserable cripple, confined to my chair. Last Wednesday evening I felt some flying symptoms of the gout: for two succeeding days I struggled bravely, and went in a chair to dine with Batt and Lord Loughborough: but on Saturday I yielded to my conqueror. I have now passed three wearisome days without amusement, and three miserable nights without sleep. Yet my acquaintance are charitable; and as virtue should never be made too difficult, I feel that a man has more friends in Pall-mall than in Bentinck-street. This fit is remarkably painful; the enemy is possessed of the left foot and knee, and how far he may carry the war God only knows. Of futurity it is impossible to speak; but it will be fortunate if I am able to leave town by the end, not of this, but of the ensuing week. What may be the future progress, whether slow or rapid, fluctuating or steady, time alone will determine; and to that master of human knowledge I must leave our Bath journey. Pity me, magnanimous Baron; pity me, tender females; pity me, Swiss exile;* and believe me, it is far better to be learning English at Uckfield: I write with difficulty, as the least motion or constraint in

* M. Wilhelm de Severy.

my

my attitude is repeated by all the nerves and sinews in my knee. But you shall find each day a note or bulletin of my health. To-morrow I must give pain to Mrs. Gibbon. Adieu. Ever yours.

N° CCXVII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lady* SHEFFIELD.

December 18th, 1787.

ALAS! alas! alas! How vain and fallacious are all the designs of man! This is now the eighteenth of December, precisely one month since my departure from Sheffield-Place; and it was firmly my wish, my hope, my resolution, that after dispatching some needful business in London, and accomplishing a pious duty at Bath, I should by this day be restored to the tranquil leisure, and friendly society, of Sheffield-Place. A cruel tyrant has disconcerted all my plans; my business in town has been neglected, my attendance at Bath is just begun, and my return is yet distant. I was not a little edified to hear of some expressions of regret and discontent on my departure; and though I am not able to produce as good evidence, you will perhaps believe that in the solitude of a London lodging I often railed at the gout for maliciously delaying his attack till I was removed from a place where my suffering would have been alleviated by every kind and comfortable attention. I grew at last so desperately impatient, as to resolve on immediate flight, without waiting till I had totally expelled the

the foe, and recovered my strength. I performed the journey with tolerable ease, but the motion has agitated the remains of the humour. I am very lame, and a second fit may possibly be the punishment of my rashness.

As yet I have seen nothing of Bath except Mrs. Gibbon, and weakness, as well as propriety, will confine me very closely to her. Lord Sheffield, with Mrs. Holroyd and Maria, dined with us yesterday. We begin to throw out hints of the shortness of our stay, and indispensable business; and, unless I should be confined by the gout, it is resolved in our cabinet to leave Bath on Thursday the twenty-sixth, and passing through Lord Loughborough's and town, to settle at Sheffield-Place, most assuredly, before the end of the year. For my own part I can say with truth, that did not the press loudly demand my presence, I could, without a sigh, allow the Duchess to reign in Downing-street the greatest part of the winter, and should be happy in the society of two persons (no common blessing) whom I love, and by whom I am beloved.

Adieu, dear Madam, and believe me, with the affection of a friend and a brother, ever yours.

N° CCXVIII.

M. GIBBON *à Mad. de* SEVERY.

Sheffield-Place, ce 17 Janvier, 1788.

SANS me piquer d'être de tous les correspondants le plus exact, j'aurois répondu plutôt à la lettre aimable,

aimable, et vraiment amicale, que vous, Madame et Monsieur de Severy, me fites l'honneur de m'écrire, si je n'avois pas été retardé par des embarras pénibles et fâcheux: lorsqu'elle me parvint, j'avois déjà quitté Sheffield-Place pour faire un voyage à Londres et à Bath: à Londres pour des affaires, et à Bath pour donner quelques jours à ma belle-mère, une dame agée que j'aime, et que je respecte. A peine avois-je passé quatre jours dans la capitale lorsque ma vieille ennemie la goutte, que je croyois avoir noyée en Suisse au fond d'une jatte de lait, m'a su retrouver. L'atteinte a été longue et douloureuse; elle m'a accompagné à Bath, elle m'a ramené ici, et ce n'est que depuis deux jours que j'ai jetté mes béquilles pour m'appuyer sur un bâton. Mon voyage, auquel j'avois destiné quatre semaines, s'est tristement prolongé à près de deux mois; aulieu de toutes les petites douceurs qu'on rassemble dans sa maison autour de soi j'ai doublement souffert, dans les hôtels garnis, dans des auberges, sur les grands chemins, et plus d'une fois il m'a fallu monter en chaise de poste dans ces momens où j'avois le plus besoin de repos. Tranquille ici au milieu de mes amis jusqu'à notre établissement à Londres la semaine prochaine, je profite de mon loisir pour m'entretenir avec vous de l'objet sur tout qui nous intéresse le plus.—Votre amitié se plait à exagérer non pas mes sentimens pour notre jeune ami, mais les services que jusqu'à présent j'ai pu lui rendre. Mes sentimens sont déjà payés d'un retour tel que je puis le désirer, par les procédés, la confiance, et l'attachement de

mon

mon élève, dont le caractère vrai, honnête, et intéressant, se developpe tous les jours plus clairement à mes yeux. Pour ce qui est de mes soins, il ne me doit encore qu'un peu de tristesse, et beaucoup d'ennui. Après avoir donné quelques jours au plaisir de nous revoir en Angleterre, il a fallu le mener à l'ecole, et il a senti bien vivement les premiers momens de notre séparation: sa santé en a même été altérée: mais au plus fort de son abattement, lorsque, pour dernière consolation, je lui ai proposé de retourner à Lausanne, il m'a répondu du ton le plus fier, *Plutôt mourir.*—Il est resté, il n'est point mort et sa santé s'est raffermie: je vous dirai avec la plus exacte vérité qu'il démentira ses amis, et ses envieux, qui ont soutenu qu'il n'apprendroit jamais l'anglois: déjà il entend presque tout ce qui se dit: il a vaincu les difficultés de la prononciation, il lit très bien, et toutes les fois qu'il en a le courage, il fait des efforts très heureux pour s'exprimer dans notre langue. Notre départ prochain ne lui laissera que trop de loisir, et lorsqu'il viendra au commencement du mois de Mars nous retrouver à Londres, je suis persuadé que nous serons encore plus étonnés de ses progrès: il sème à cette heure, c'est alors qu'il moissonnera, et les trois mois qu'il pourra passer avec moi et mes amis, lui laisseront bien des souvenirs agréables et utiles.

Permettez à présent que je descende pour un moment de votre salon à la cuisine. Je vous remercie mille fois des soins que vous avez bien voulu vous donner, pour me trouver une gouvernante, et

je

je sens tout le prix de votre obligeante intention de la prendre chez vous dès le mois d'Avril: pour peu qu'elle ait de dispositions, elle ne peut que se perfectionner à une si bonne école; vous aurez sans doute la bonté de communiquer cet arrangement à Monsieur Deyverdun. J'apprends avec une véritable satisfaction qu'il se porte mieux, et qu'il passe bien des soirées dans une maison, où je me retrouve souvent par la foi, et l'espérance. Vous voudrez bien lui annoncer une lettre de ma part, peu après mon arrivée à Londres: mais je ne lui fais point d'excuses, puisque nous sommes également coupables.

Adieu, Madame, le papier me manque: mes sentimens sont inépuisables.

N° CCXIX.

Dr. WILLIAM ROBERTSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

MY DEAR SIR, College of Edinburgh, Feb. 27th, 1788.

THOUGH you have now been some time in London, yet as I heard of your welfare by different channels, and as I know from experience how much a man has to do who is printing three quartos, even after he thinks they are altogether ready for the press, I have hitherto forborne to interrupt you by any letter or inquiry of mine. But there is such a general impatience to see your new publication among people of letters here; and, as your friend, I am so frequently interrogated about the length it has advanced, and the time when it will appear,

appear, that I begin to be ashamed of knowing nothing more about it than other people. I must request of you then to furnish me with such information as may both preserve my credit, and gratify my own curiosity. My expectations from this part of your work are, indeed, very high. Your materials begin to improve, and are certainly much more copious than during a great part of the period you have gone through. You have three or four events as great, and splendid, and singular, as the heart of an historian could wish to delineate. The contemporary writers will furnish you with all the necessary facts. To adorn them as elegant writers, or to account for them as philosophers, never entered into their heads. This they have left to you.

Since you went to the continent I have not done so much as I wished. My health, until lately, has been more shattered; and as I advance in life, (I am now sixty-six,) though my faculties, I imagine, are still entire, yet I find my mind less active and ardent. I have, however, finished a very careful revise of all my works, and have given them the last polish they will receive from my hand. I have made some additions to each of them, and in the History of Scotland pretty considerable ones. I have desired Mr. Strahan to send to you a copy of them uniformly bound, and hope you will accept of them, as a memorial of my esteem and affection. You will see that I have got in Mr. Whitaker an adversary so bigotted and zealous, that though I have denied no article of faith, and am at least as orthodox as himself, yet he rails against me with

all the asperity of theological hatred. I shall adhere to my fixed maxim of making no reply. May I hope that when you see Lord Loughborough you will remember me to him with kindness and respect. Our friend Mr. Smith, whom we were in great danger of losing, is now almost perfectly re-established. I have the honour to be, with great truth, your most faithful humble Servant,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

N° CCXX.

Lord NORTH *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR, Grosvenor-street, May 1st, 1788.

UPON the receipt of your books and the perusal of your preface,* my heart was too full to give you an immediate answer: so kind and honourable a testimony of your friendship and esteem would have afforded me the greatest pleasure in the moment of my highest health and political prospe-

* Alluding to the following beautiful and just encomium in the Preface to the last three volumes of Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: "Were I ambitious of any other patron than the public, I would inscribe this work to a Statesman who, in a long, a stormy, and at length an unfortunate administration, had many political opponents, almost without a personal enemy: who has retained in his fall from power many faithful and disinterested friends, and who, under the pressure of severe infirmity, enjoys the lively vigour of his mind, and the felicity of his incomparable temper. Lord North will permit me to express the feelings of friendship in the language of truth, but even truth and friendship should be silent if he still dispensed the favours of the Crown." S.

rity;

rity; judge then what I must feel upon receiving it in my retirement, while labouring under a calamity which would be severe, were it not for the goodness of my friends. I have it, thank God, in my power to return your kindness in the manner which will be most agreeable to you, by assuring you sincerely that nothing could have given me more real comfort and satisfaction than the notice that you have taken of me.

I am, dear Sir,
Most gratefully yours,
NORTH.

N° CCXXI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Downing-street, June 21st, 1788.

INSTEAD of the Historian you receive a short letter, in your eyes an indispensable tribute. This day, at length, after long delay and frequent expostulation, I have received the writings, which I am now in the act of signing, sealing and delivering, according to the lawyer's directions. * * * * * * * * I long to be at Sheffield-Place. You see my departure is not postponed a moment by idleness or pleasure, but the precise day still hangs on contingencies, and we must all be patient, if our wishes should be thwarted. I say our wishes, for I sincerely desire to be with you. I have had many dinners, some splendid and memorable, with Hastings last Thursday, with the

Prince of Wales next Tuesday at Craufurd's. But the town empties, Texier is silent, and in an evening, I *desiderate* the resources of a family or a club. Caplin has finished the Herculean labour, and seven majestic boxes will abdicate on Monday your hall. Severy has likewise dispatched his affairs, and secured his companion Clarke, who is arrived in town; but his schemes are abridged by the inexorable rigour of Lord Howe, who has assured our great and fair intercessors, that by the King's order the dock-yards are shut against all strangers. We therefore give up Portsmouth, and content ourselves with two short trips; one to Stowe and Oxford, the other to Chatham; and if we can catch a launch and review, *encore vit on.* He (Severy, not Lord Howe) salutes with me the family. Adieu. Yours.

N° CCXXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Downing-street, Saturday.

ACCORDING to your imperious law I write a line, to postpone my arrival till Friday, or perhaps Saturday, but I hope Friday, and I promise you that not a moment shall be wasted. And now let me add a cool word as to my final departure, which is irrevocably fixed between the tenth and fifteenth of July. After a full and free enjoyment of each other's society, let us submit, without a struggle, to reason and fate. It would be idle to pretend business

ness at Lausanne; but a complete year will elapse before my return. Severy and myself are now expected with some impatience. I am thankful for your hospitable entertainment; but I wish you to remember Homer's admirable precept:

"Welcome the coming, *speed* the parting guest."

Spare me, therefore, spare yourself, the trouble of a fruitless contest, in which, according to a great author, I foresee a certain loss of time, and a probable loss of temper. I believe we shall have both Craufurd and Hugonin at Sheffield-place. Adieu.

N° CCXXIII.

The Same to the Same.

Downing-street, Saturday, June, 1788.

I HAVE but a moment between my return home and my dressing, and heartily tired I am; for I am now involved in the horrors of shopping, packing, &c. yet I must write four lines, to prevent a growl, which might salute the arrival of an empty-handed post on Sunday. I hope the whole caravan, Christians and Pagans, arrived in good health at the castle; that the turrets begin to rise to the third heaven; that each has found a proper occupation; and that Tuft* enjoys the freedom and felicity of the lawn. Yesterday the august scene was closed for this year. Sheridan surpassed himself; and though I am far from considering him as a perfect

* Lady Sheffield's lap-dog.

orator, there were many beautiful passages in his speech, on justice, filial love, &c.; one of the closest chains of argument I ever heard, to prove that Hastings was responsible for the acts of Middleton; and a compliment, much admired, to a certain Historian of your acquaintance. Sheridan, in the close of his speech, sunk into Burke's arms; —a good actor; but I called this morning, he is perfectly well. Adieu.

N° CCXXIV.

M. Gibbon *à M. de* Severy.

Sheffield-place, ce 30 Juin, 1788.

Lorsque la réputation est une fois perdue on n'a plus rien à ménager. Nous connoissons des femmes qui ont sçu tirer parti d'un principe aussi commode, et il me sert dans ce moment vis à vis de Mr. W***. Je devois lui donner à dîner le 1r de Juin. Je lui ai manqué de parole, il ne compte plus sur mon exactitude pour le 1r Juillet, et il n'en pensera pas plus mal en le renvoyant comme je fais à présent au 1r Août. Le jour de mon départ du château de Sheffield est enfin fixé au 15 Juillet, et la mer dans cette saison est si traitable que je serai moi même étonné si je ne me trouve pas à Lausanne le 25 ou 26 du même mois. N'attribuez cependant pas, Monsieur, ce retard, qui s'est prolongé de semaine en semaine, uniquement à la légèreté de mon caractère. Le départ des Sheffield pour la province a été retardé par le procès de Hastings, et je n'ai pu leur refuser mes derniers instans;

instans; quinze jours ou trois semaines à la campagne; un arrangement assez avantageux au sujet d'une petite terre détachée que j'ai vendue m'a occupé vers la fin de mon séjour; et vous ne me ferez pas un crime d'avoir accordé quelques jours de plus aux dernières courses de notre enfant qui me rejoint bientôt ici. A propos de cet enfant, je saisis le moment de son absence pour vous dire du fond de mon cœur combien j'en suis content. Si j'ai pu lui être de quelque utilité j'en suis bien recompensé par l'attachement qu'il me témoigne, et par les plaisirs de père qu'il me fait éprouver: jusqu'à ce jour sa conduite ne m'a pas donné un instant de regret, ou d'inquiétude: nous parlerons de lui à notre aise sur ma terrasse, ou auprès de votre feu. Adieu, Monsieur, Madame, et Mademoiselle: car j'écris en même tems à tous les trois: je ne puis me résoudre à mêler un objet aussi intéressant avec mes détails de maison: cependant je prie Madame de Severy de donner à ma gouvernante les ordres nécessaires pour la renaissance du ménage: voilà un billet pour Monsieur Deyverdun.

P. S. Milady Sheffield dit qu'elle ne sera heureuse qu'en faisant la connoissance de Madame de Severy. Il est vrai que nous sommes peintres, et que nous attrapons assez bien la ressemblance.

N° CCXXV.

Dr. WILLIAM ROBERTSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, College of Edinburgh, July 30th, 1788.

LONG before this I should have acknowledged the receipt of your most acceptable present; but for several weeks I have been afflicted with a violent fit of deafness, and that unsocial malady is always accompanied with such a degree of languor, as renders even the writing of a letter an effort. During my solitude the perusal of your book has been my chief amusement and consolation. I have gone through it once with great attention, and am now advanced to the last volume in my second reading. I ventured to predict the superior excellence of the volumes lately published, and I have not been a false prophet. Indeed, when I consider the extent of your undertaking, and the immense labour of historical and philosophic research requisite towards executing every part of it, I am astonished that all this should have been accomplished by one man. I know no example, in any age or nation, of such a vast body of valuable and elegant information communicated by any individual. I feel, however, some degree of mortification mingled with my astonishment. Before you began your historic career, I used to pride myself in being at least the most industrious historian of the age; but now, alas! I can pretend no longer even to that praise, and must say, as Pliny did of his uncle, *Si comparer illi,*

illi, sum desidiosissimus. Your style appears to me improved in these new volumes; by the habit of writing, you write with greater ease. I am sorry to find that our ideas on the effects of the Crusades do not altogether coincide. I considered that point with great care, and cannot help thinking still that my opinion was well founded. I shall consult the authorities to which I refer; for when my sentiments differ from yours, I have some reason to distrust them, and I may possibly trouble you with a letter on the subject. I am much flattered with the manner in which you have so often mentioned my name. *Lætus sum laudari a te laudato viro.* I feel much satisfaction in having been distinguished by the two historians of my own times, whose favourable opinion I was most ambitious of obtaining.

I hope this letter may find you still in England. When you return to Lausanne, permit me to recommend to your good offices my youngest son, who is now at Yverdun on account of his health, and lives with M. Herman, a clergyman there. You will find the young man (if you can rely on the partial testimony of a father) sensible, modest, and well-bred, and though no great scholar, he has seen much; having returned from India, where he served last war, by Bassora, Bagdat, Moussul, and Aleppo. He is now a Captain in the twenty-third regiment. If you have any friend at Yverdun, be so good as to recommend him. It will do him credit to have your countenance. I have desired him to pay his respects to you at Lausanne.

Farewell,

Farewell, my dear Sir. I ever am yours most faithfully,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

N° CCXXVI.

Major RENNELL *to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR, London, August 21st, 1788.

IF I had the ability to express how much pleasure and information I have derived from *only* a hasty perusal of your late work, I would endeavour to express it. Much of the pleasure, perhaps, arose from the consciousness that it affords such rich materials for the geography of the eastern countries; and that I may be enabled to keep alive the opinion which you have been pleased to express concerning my former labours. But this is too selfish. I am no less conscious of the obligations I have to your works for enlarging my ideas on the great subject of the history of mankind, for storing my mind with historic facts, and for enabling me to arrange them.

As I informed you before, my next task is the Geography of Persia, together with the rest of the countries situated between the east end of the Mediterranean and the Indus, and between the parallels of the north end of the Caspian, and the Arabian *Sea.* The scale one inch to a degree. It will be contained in one sheet of grand eagle. The construction of the parallels and meridians (many days work!) is completed, but the investigation of latitudes, and particularly the longitudes of

of the fundamental points, will prevent me from making any progress in the construction for some time. I am possessed of a curious Arabic map of the tract in question. It was engraved at Constantinople, A. H. 1142, and the names (according to Mr. Wilkins) are very correctly engraved. It contains more of *Transoxiana* than any map I ever saw. We have been promised a map of the Euphrates and Tigris, from (I think) M. Beauchamp. I am certain that D'Anville has mistaken the relative courses of those rivers; Ives and Ranwolf tell me as much; and D'Anville's Euphrates is also faulty in the part between Zeugma and Babylon, and is placed too far from the Mediterranean; how to correct it is the point. All the *natural* geography of the tract in question must be effected by means of modern documents, for the ancient are too vague, generally speaking. I hope you continue to enjoy your health.

I am, with great truth,
Dear Sir,
Your obliged and faithful humble Servant,
T. RENNELL.

N° CCXXVII.

M. GIBBON *à S. E. M.* l'AVOYER DE SINNER.

MONSIEUR,

DÈS ma plus tendre jeunesse j'ai connu la sagesse et l'équité du gouvernement Bernois, et dans ma retraite à Lausanne je partage depuis cinq ans

le

le bonheur commun des sujets de la république. Mais je viens d'éprouver dans une contravention involontaire aux loix, la bienveillance particulière du souverain. L'objet sans doute est peu important par lui-même, mais je sens très vivement les procédés flatteurs et distingués de leurs Excellences à mon égard, en me restituant le vin de Madère que j'avois fait entrer sans patente, et en me dispensant généreusement de la confiscation et de l'amende. Je prends la liberté, Monsieur, de m'adresser à votre Excellence pour faire parvenir l'expression de ma reconnoissance au conseil suprême qu'elle préside. Qu'il daigne agréer l'hommage d'un homme libre qui n'a jamais su flatter ni les peuples ni les princes.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec respect,
Monsieur, de V. E. &c.

N° CCXXVIII.

S. E. M. l'Avoyer De Sinner *à M.* Gibbon.

Monsieur, Berne, ce 28 7bre, 1788.

Nous devons être sensibles aux sentimens qu'un homme de votre réputation et de vos lumières voue à notre gouvernement. Je ne manquerai pas de mettre sous les yeux de LL. EE. la lettre qui nous prouve ces sentimens.

C'est en effet à l'estime générale que vos savans ouvrages vous ont acquise, que nous n'avons pas hésité de vous donner la petite preuve de notre considération, dont vous voulez bien, Monsieur, m'adresser des remercîmens si obligeans.

Je

Je souhaite que l'ultérieur séjour que vous voudrez encore faire dans ce canton, nous fournisse des occasions plus essentielles de vous convaincre de notre estime. Je joins à ces assurances celles de la considération distinguée avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

L'AVOYER DE SINNER.

N° CCXXIX.

Dr. ADAM SMITH *to Mr.* GIBBON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Edinburgh, Dec. 10th, 1788.

I HAVE ten thousand apologies to make, for not having long ago returned you my best thanks for the very agreeable present you made me of the three last volumes of your History. I cannot express to you the pleasure it gives me to find, that by the universal assent of every man of taste and learning, whom I either know or correspond with, it sets you at the very head of the whole literary tribe at present existing in Europe. I ever am, my dear friend,

Most affectionately yours,

ADAM SMITH.

N° CCXXX.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Lady* PORTEN, Kensington-Palace.

DEAR MADAM, Lausanne, June 27th, 1789.

I RECEIVED with more concern than surprize, your kind notification of my poor uncle's departure.

ture. My own knowledge of his many valuable qualities teaches me to sympathize in your loss; but his long infirmities and gradual decay must have prepared you for the melancholy event, and your own reason will suggest the best and strongest motives of consolation: among these is your regard for the amiable children whom he has left behind. Your labours for their future happiness will be assisted by all your friends, who are attached to his memory; and for my own part, I beg leave to assure you, that on every occasion I shall consider them as my near and dear relations. When I had last the pleasure of seeing Charlotte at Kensington, I was delighted with her innocent cheerfulness, with her assiduous care of her poor father, and with an appearance of sense and discretion far beyond her years. How happy should I think myself, if I had a daughter of her age and disposition, who in a short time would be qualified to govern my family, and to be my companion and comfort in the decline of life!

You will, I am sure, be pleased to hear that my situation at Lausanne continues, almost in every respect, as agreeable as I could wish. The only circumstance which embitters my happiness, is the declining health of my friend Mons. Deyverdun. I cannot long flatter myself with the hope of possessing him. I am, dear Madam, &c.

N° CCXXXI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Belvidere, Bath.

DEAR MADAM, Lausanne, May 18th, 1791.

As much as I am accustomed to my own sins, I am shocked, really shocked, when I think of my long and most inexcusable silence; nor do I dare to compute how many months I have suffered to elapse without sending a single line (Oh shame! shame!) to the best and dearest of my friends, who indeed has been very seldom out of my thoughts. I have sometimes imagined that if the opportunities of writing occurred less frequently, they would be seized with more diligence; but the unfortunate departure of the post twice every week encourages procrastination, and each short successive delay is indulged without scruple, till the whole has swelled to a tremendous account. I will try, alas! to reform; and, although I am afraid that writing grows painful to you, I have the confidence to solicit a *speedy line*, to say that you love and forgive me. After a long experience of the unfeeling doubts and delays of the law, you will probably soon hear from Lord Sheffield that the Beriton transaction is at last concluded, and I hope that you will be satisfied with the full and firm security of your annuity. That you may long continue to enjoy it is the first and most sincere wish of my heart.

In the placid course of our lives, at Lausanne and

and Bath, we have few events to relate, and fewer changes to describe; but I indulge myself in the pleasing belief that we are both as well and as happy as the common order of nature will allow us to expect. I should be satisfied, had I received from time to time some indirect, but agreeable, information of your health. For myself, I have no complaint, except the gout; and though the visits of my old enemy are somewhat longer, and more enfeebling, they are confined to my feet and knees; the pain is moderate, and my imprisonment to my chamber, or my chair, is much alleviated by the daily kindness of my friends. I wish it were in my power to give you an adequate idea of the conveniency of my house, and the beauty of my garden; both of which I have improved at a considerable expense since the death of poor Deyverdun. But the loss of a friend is indeed irreparable. Were I ten years younger, I might possibly think of a female companion; but the choice is difficult, the success doubtful, the engagement perpetual, and at fifty-four a man should never think of altering the whole system of his life and habits. The disposal of Beriton, and the death of my aunt Hester, who has left me her estate in Sussex, makes me very easy in my worldly affairs: my income is equal to my expense, and my expense is adequate to my wishes. You may possibly have heard of literary projects which are ascribed to me by the public without my knowledge: but it is much more probable that I have closed the account; and though I shall never lay aside the pleasing occupations

cupations of study, you may be assured that I have no serious settled thoughts of a new work. Next year I shall meditate, and I trust shall execute, a visit to England, in which the Belvidere is one of my powerful loadstones. I often reflect with a painful emotion on the imperious circumstances which have thrown us at such a distance from each other.

In the moving picture of the world, you cannot be indifferent to the strange revolution which has humbled all that was high, and exalted all that was low, in France. The irregular and lively spirit of the nation has disgraced their liberty, and instead of building a free constitution, they have only exchanged despotism for anarchy. This town and country are crowded with noble exiles; and we sometimes count in an assembly a dozen Princesses and Duchesses. Burke, if I remember right, is no favourite of yours; but there is surely much eloquence and much sense in his book. The prosperity of England forms a proud contrast with the disorders of France; but I hope we shall avoid the folly of a Russian war. Pitt, in this instance, seems too like his father. Mr. Helrard, a sensible man, and his pupil have left us. They found, as your friends will always find, the weight of your recommendation with me. I am, dearest Madam, ever most affectionately yours.

N° CCXXXII.

Dr. WILLIAM ROBERTSON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

DEAR SIR, Lennel-House, Aug. 25th, 1791.

SOME time before the publication of my Historical Disquisition concerning India I desired our friend Mr. Cadell to send a copy of it to you in my name. I hope you received it long ago, and will allow it to remain in your library, as a memorial of my respect and friendship. No man had formed a more decided resolution of retreating early from public view, and of spending the eve of life in the tranquillity of professional and domestic occupations; but, directly in the face of that purpose, I step forth with a new work, when just on the brink of threescore and ten. The preface of the book gives a fair and simple account how this happened. Hitherto I have no cause to repent of a step which I took with hesitation and anxiety. My book has met with a reception beyond what the *spe lentus, pavidusque futuri,* dared to expect. I find, however, like other parents, that I have a partial fondness for this child of my old age; and cannot set my heart quite at ease, until I know your opinion of it. I need not say with what perfect confidence I rest upon your judgment, and how happy it will make me to find that this production meets with your approbation. Nothing will add so much to that pleasure, as your communicating to me any remarks that occurred to you in perusing it. While I was engaged in composing

ing the Disquisition it often occurred to me, that I was more upon your ground than in any of my former works; and I often wished that I had been so near to you as to profit by your advice and information. Next to that will be the benefit that I may derive from your friendly strictures. Be so kind then as to mention to me any error or omission you have observed; every criticism of yours will be instructive.

Permit me to request another favour. You allowed me to hope, that as soon as you fixed upon a new subject you would let me know, and give me the satisfaction of indulging the hopes of living until you finished it. I trust that you are not idle still. I may now tell you with authority, that you are yet far from that period of life when you should lay down your pen. I can say from experience, that the busiest season of life is the most happy; and I have no doubt that you will concur with me in this sentiment. Let me know then, my dear Sir, how you are, what you are doing, and what progress you make. As for my part, I enjoy good health; and, except some fits of deafness, am little troubled with the infirmities of old age. I write this at my son-in-law's, Mr. Brydone, who, if he had not a wife and family, loves Switzerland so well, and has so many friends in Lausanne, that I believe he would gladly join you there. Believe me to be, with great respect, your most faithful obedient servant,

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

N° CCXXXIII.

M. de SAUSSURE *à M.* GIBBON.

MONSIEUR, Genève, ce 31 Mars, 1792.

J'ENTENDIS hier avec bien de l'intérêt la lecture que M. de Germani fit à notre société de la lettre que vous lui avez adressée. Mais j'y vis avec peine que vous paroissiez croire que j'avois cherché à établir que le *sentiment* de la reconnoissance étoit inconnu aux anciens Grecs. Je parlai du *mot*, du *remercîment*, qui en est l'expression, mais j'étois bien éloigné de douter du sentiment. Je le dis expressément; j'ajoutai que ce sentiment se manifestant même chez les animaux, il étoit impossible de supposer que l'homme en eût jamais été destitué; j'employai enfin, pour prouver l'existence du sentiment et du devoir de la reconnoissance, l'argument que vous employez vous même, Monsieur; je dis que quelqu'un qui demandoit un service à un autre commenceroit toujours par lui rappeller les services qu'il lui avoit lui-même rendus.

Je citai Thétis, qui, lorsqu'elle va demander un service d'abord à Jupiter, puis à Vulcain, commence par rappeller à l'un qu'elle l'a délié lorsque les dieux l'avoient garotté, et à l'autre qu'elle l'a recueilli lorsque Junon l'avoit précipité du haut des cieux. J'avois donc pris toutes les précautions possibles pour qu'on ne crût pas que je niois l'existence de ce sentiment chez les Grecs.

Sans doute, Monsieur, vous futes distrait pendant

dant cette partie de mon rapport, et lorsqu'on a comme vous la tête remplie de grandes et belles idées, il est permis de les suivre et de laisser courir celles des autres. Mais comme l'idée que vous m'avez attribuée est tout à la fois infiniment absurde et immorale, il m'est impossible de vous laisser croire que je l'ai eue.

Quant au *mot*, je ne crois pas qu'Hésiode ni Homère ayent jamais employé χαρις et ses dérivés autrement que comme les substantifs *de gracieux* et *d'agréable*. Les vœux d'Ulysse pour les Phéaciens et pour Nausicaé sont heureusement choisis pour défendre cette thèse; ils ne contiennent cependant point ce qui fait l'essence du remercîment, savoir l'idée de *l'obligation* proprement dite, et du désir de *rendre la pareille*. D'ailleurs cet exemple est presque unique; dans les dix neuf vingtièmes des services rendus on les met en poche et tout est dit. Enfin ce qui m'avoit paru absolument décisif dans cette question c'est que les sacrifices innombrables dont Homère donne la description sont tous d'*invocation*, sans qu'il y en ait un seul d'*actions de graces*; que le mot de χαριστηρια, qui exprime les sacrifices, ne se trouve ni dans Hésiode ni dans Homère, et que Xénophon est le premier auteur qui l'a employé; et qu'encore une fois la chose même ne se trouve point; que, par exemple, Achille, après sa grande victoire, Ulysse après la sienne sur les galans de sa femme, n'en rendent pas graces à Minerve qui n'a pas cessé de combattre à côté d'eux et de leur rendre ostensiblement les plus signalés services.

Je n'insisterai pas davantage sur la partie littéraire de cette question, et si vous persistez à croire que les anciens Grecs *remercioient* et *exprimoient* la reconnoissance comme l'ont fait ensuite les Grecs modernes, et les Latins et nous, je n'aurai point honte de m'être trompé vis à vis de vous; mais ce donc je rougirois éternellement, ce seroit d'avoir pu croire que le *sentiment* de la reconnoissance est une invention moderne, et presqu'une affaire de mode; c'est cela qui seroit d'un tigre ou d'un Jacobin, pour me servir, Monsieur, de cet ingénieux rapprochement que vous employez dans votre lettre.

J'ai saisi avec empressement cette occasion de vous prouver, Monsieur, combien je mets de prix à votre estime, combien et moi et ma famille nous avons été charmés de lier avec vous une connoissance plus particulière, et combien nous désirerions tous d'être plus à portée de la cultiver.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec la considération la plus distinguée,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

DE SAUSSURE.

N° CCXXXIV.

M. le Professeur HEYNE *à M.* GIBBON.

MONSIEUR, Gottingen, ce 4 Août, 1792.

CE n'est pas une prérogative à laquelle on puisse être insensible, d'avoir l'honneur d'être connu d'un savant du premier ordre, et d'être informé des sentimens favorables de sa part. Ainsi permettez, Monsieur,

Monsieur, que j'ose cultiver cette bonne disposition qu'on me dit que vous avez marqué sur mon sujet, et que je vous fasse l'hommage comme à un de ce petit nombre de nos contemporains qui ayent fixé mon admiration. Monsieur le Professeur Volkel, qui a été un de mes disciples, pourra attester la vérité et sincerité de mes sentimens. En même tems c'est à sa prière, que j'ose vous intéresser pour son sort; il n'est pas à sa place où il est à présent, et il pourroit être plus utile dans une autre situation. En cas donc que quelque occasion se présentera, que l'on chercheroit un gouverneur ou compagnon de voyage pour un jeune seigneur, il pourroit être proposé et recommandé avec toute apparence d'un bon succès.

Vous êtes trop bon juge de ce qu'on doit à un jeune homme, qui a mérité par ses progrès dans les études et par sa bonne conduite, qu'on s'intéresse à sa fortune, pour être offensé de la liberté que je prends. Je m'y ai laissé entrainer d'autant plus, parcequ'elle me fournissoit l'occasion si désirée pour vous faire connoître les sentimens de la plus parfaite considération avec laquelle je suis,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant Serviteur,

HEYNE.

N° CCXXXV.

M. NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

Ce dimanche matin.

LES Magistrats de Genève ont souscrit aux modifications proposées par Monsieur de Montesquiou; elles ne paroissent pas changer le fonds. On a expédié un courier extraordinaire pour porter à Paris cette nouvelle convention, et si l'on ne suggère pas de nouvelles difficultés, on espère que la ratification reviendra dans huit jours. Un assez grand nombre de gardes nationales entrent journellement dans Genève, et l'on ne sçait comment les refuser. On dit que Monsieur de Watteville, le commandant des troupes Suisses, se plaint de leurs relations avec ses soldats. En général la situation de Genève est bien changée.

Nous n'avons pris aucun parti pour notre retour à Genève. Nous attendons, ou la nouvelle de la ratification, ou une plus grande certitude qu'elle n'éprouvera aucune difficulté.

C'est comme nouvelliste que j'ai pris la liberté d'écrire à Monsieur Gibbon. Je lui rendrai son correspondant ordinaire, qui lui même ne trouveroit pas bon que l'on prît sa place. Mon seul mérite auprès de Monsieur Gibbon, c'est de le dispenser de répondre, mais je le prie instamment d'accepter avec intérêt et bonté, l'hommage de mon inviolable attachement.

N°

N° CCXXXVI.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

Copet, 13 Octobre, 1791.

JE vous prie, Monsieur, d'observer que les époques sont sacrées pour un historien; les vendanges s'approchent, vous sçavez l'engagement que vous avez pris, et d'ailleurs nous voudrions nous conformer un peu au costume de nos chers compatriotes, et nous enivrer au moins des agrémens de votre conversation. J'ai prié Monsieur Levade de vous accompagner. Je voudrois que vous déterminassiez Monsieur le Chevalier de Boufflers à se réunir avec vous, et Madame de Biron, si j'osois m'en flatter, ainsi que toutes les personnes qui pourroient vous plaire, et leur être agréables. Vous jugez du prix que je mettrois à une société si rare et si chérie; mais enfin, seul ou environné de tant d'éclat, vous serez toujours en grand nombre, puisque vous me rappellez constamment, lorsque vous parlez, ces esprits connus des Hébreux, qui n'entrent jamais qu'en légion dans le corps d'un homme; grace, pour la comparaison, elle m'auroit paru plus juste, si les anges alloient ainsi par troupe, et je m'en serois servie plus volontiers. Monsieur Necker, Monsieur, joint ses instances aux miennes. Agréez l'assurance de tous nos sentimens.

N° CCXXXVII.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Genève, ce 30 Mars.

Je l'ai vû et je ne le crois pas, disoit Fontenelle d'un avare devenu libéral un moment; ne pourrois-je pas m'exprimer de même en recevant cette jolie, cette touchante lettre? Mais elle ne m'a pas disposée à la plaisanterie; c'est une preuve d'absence, et la douce habitude que j'avois formée ne peut se rompre sans tristesse. Vous avez fait, Monsieur, à toute notre société la même impression qu'à nous, mais pourquoi dirois-je la même? tout est reçu, selon l'axiome, à la manière de celui qui reçoit: et les ames les plus sensibles seront toujours celles qui vous admireront le plus. Je défie donc, même les deux belles veuves, de vous chérir comme nous; l'on vous juge en dehors; nous vous avons jugé dans le fond de notre cœur et nous vous y gardons.

Nous avons reçu en effet des nouvelles touchantes de l'infortunée victime dont les regards nous cherchent au moment du sacrifice; mais nous aurions voulu pouvoir vous en entretenir, car les yeux d'un ami sont le vrai télescope de la pensée; ils nous aident à traverser les plus grands espaces.

Je vous rends graces de m'avoir rassurée sur la santé de Monsieur de Severy; toute cette charmante famille m'intéresse, sous différents rapports; le mérite augmente bien de prix dans notre siècle; c'est une eau salutaire au milieu d'un aride désert.

Si les nouvelles sont vraies, l'Assemblée fait à présent

présent du ministère, le repas de l'évangile; mais il faut se taire, car s'irriter de ce qu'on fait, c'est souffrir, et s'en moquer, c'est ressembler aux barbares qui dansent et chantent autour des victimes.

La lettre de Berne a eu ici un plein succès; je vous rends grace de nous l'avoir envoyée. Les Allemans sont à présent beaucoup plus François que nous, et par leurs sentimens et même par leur langage. Je finis, Monsieur, en vous rappellant trois promesses; la lecture des Opinions Religieuses, car si elle ne change pas les vôtres, vous vivrez du moins encore plus intimément avec nous; vous jugerez du génie, de l'éloquence, et des sentimens de Monsieur Necker; et vous jugerez aussi de l'impression que j'en recevois. Je connois trop la supériorité et l'universalité de votre esprit, pour vous croire étranger aux plus grandes questions que les hommes se soient jamais proposées; ce n'est pas vous qui traiterez légèrement les profondeurs de nos destinées; ce n'est pas vous qui traiterez légèrement les affections les plus douces, les plus propres à consoler deux ames étroitement unies, qui ne peuvent plus retenir le tems prêt à s'échapper pour elles, et qui le suivent, et se suivent jusques dans les abîmes de l'éternité, et vous donnerez quelques larmes au passage qui exprime ce sentiment avec des couleurs inimitables. Je vous rappelle un autre projet qui me tient fort à cœur, et que je ne veux pas même désigner. Enfin votre troisième promesse est pour nous un bonheur présent; nous vous attendrons à Copet, et les charmes de votre société nous feront oublier encore une

une fois les peines de la vie. Nous nous réunissons, Monsieur Necker et moi, pour vous offrir l'hommage d'une tendre amitié, et il me semble qu'en me doublant ainsi, je répare auprès de vous tout ce que le tems m'a fait perdre.

N° CCXXXVIII.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Copet, ce Samedi matin.

J'ALLOIS vous écrire, Monsieur, quand j'ai reçu par M. Favre une marque de souvenir que je désirois vivement, et que mon impatience ne me permettoit plus d'attendre: malgré votre silence volontaire, malgré le silence involontaire que j'ai gardé avec vous, vouz n'avez jamais cessé un instant d'être l'objet de mon admiration, et de cette tendre et pure affection sur laquelle le tems ne peut avoir d'empire. Vos ouvrages ont fait mes délassemens les plus doux; je ne vous ai pas peint l'impression, que j'en avois reçue; car dans les deux ans du ministère orageux de M. Necker, je n'ai pas eu une heure de calme, ou de liberté: d'ailleurs l'on n'aime pas toujours entretenir un muet, sûre de l'importuner, ne fut-ce que par les remords. A présent, Monsieur, vous nous ôtez la crainte d'être indiscrèts, et nous vous demandons avec instances, M. Necker et moi, de nous faire l'honneur de passer quelques jours à Copet. Adieu, Monsieur, vous me répondrez à Copet, et vous ferez un bien grand plaisir à d'anciens et fidèles amis, qui malgré

gré tous les discours sont plus que jamais dignes de votre intérêt, et de votre estime.

N° CCXXXIX.

The Same to the Same.

A Rolle, le 3 Avril.

JE réponds à votre silence, Monsieur; c'est toujours du moins une manière de me rapprocher de vous. J'en cherchois une aujourd'hui, car mon cœur se serre un peu en quittant un lieu plus voisin de celui que vous habitez, et où nous avons reçu des marques ineffaçables de votre amitié, de cette amitié dirigée par l'esprit le plus délicat, et par un instinct de bonté qui donneroit même du charme à l'indifférence. Voulez-vous bien, Monsieur, témoigner à Madame de Severy toute notre reconnoissance? J'avois le désir de lui écrire; j'ai craint de me rendre importune. Mademoiselle Geffroy m'assure que M. Monad est content de l'état où nous laissons la maison. Ce M. Monad me paroît fort honnête homme, et fort utile à ceux dont il a la confiance. Je présume que je ne tarderai pas à profiter de votre aimable invitation. Nous irons passer quelques jours dans votre palais des fées, ou plutot de génies, par une exception inouie pour moi; et que j'offre à celui qui fait aussi une exception dans notre cœur à tant d'autres égards; mais les nouvelles nous empêchent de céder encore à notre impatience par l'incertitude où elles nous jettent; les *Croisés* semblent avoir l'avantage; et le résultat de cette combinaison, ou de toute autre,

autre, fait aussi de notre fortune un problême insoluble pour le présent; cependant avant de voir des maisons, il faudroit que nos plans furent arrêtés. Vous jugez, Monsieur, par ma comparaison, que j'écris à présent de Jérusalem; vos paroles sont pour moi ces fleuves de lait et de miel de la terre promise; et je crois entendre leur doux murmure; cependant je regrette encore le plaisir que j'avois à vous entretenir pendant le jour, de mes pensées de la veille. Je vivois ainsi deux fois avec vous, dans le temps passé et dans le temps présent; et ces temps s'embellissoient l'un par l'autre; puis-je me flatter de retrouver ce bonheur dans nos allées de Copet? Prévenez-nous cependant, quand vous aurez l'intention de nous voir. Nous tâcherons de réunir quelques personnes qui veulent venir à Copet, et nous vous devrons leurs plaisirs et les nôtres. Mille tendres amitiés.

N° CCXL.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

JE voyois arriver, Monsieur, avec un sentiment délicieux, le jour que je devois passer avec vous; le spectacle d'une habitation qui vous rend heureux auroit certainement ajouté à mon bonheur, ou diminué mes peines, pour employer un langage convenable aux circonstances. Je sens que j'aurois réuni à vous pour toujours, dans ma pensée, l'image de votre jardin, de votre bibliothèque, de tous ces sages qui vous environnent, et qui seroient restés dans la poussière des siècles, si votre bel ouvrage ne

ne les avoit fait revivre. C'est donc absolument contre mon vœu, que j'ai différé une visite dont je me faisois une véritable fête. Vous m'avez toujours été cher; mais l'amitié que vous montrez à M. Necker ajoute encore à celle que vous m'inspiriez à tant de titres; et je vous aime à présent d'une double affection. Cependant je suis très en colère contre M. Necker, il a cédé à quelques raisons dont il vous rendra compte. Il n'appartient pas à tout le monde d'avoir, comme M. Gibbon, les avantages du génie, sans en avoir les inconvéniens. Les projets de M. Necker sont toujours environnés d'un cortège de troupes légères, qui ne cessent de se battre sur la route; et l'on ne sçait jamais quel sera le résultat du combat: cette fois il a fallu consentir à un délai, et M. Necker, qui s'en affligeoit lui-même, a voulu vous écrire le premier; mais il ne vous a point dit assez à mon gré, avec quel attendrissement, avec quelle reconnoissance nous avons reçu vos soins incomparables dans cette terrible époque de notre vie. Je ne tarderai pas, j'espère, à vaincre les obstacles qui contrarient un projet cher à mon cœur. Dans ce moment le danger éminent de M. Tronchin ne nous auroit pas permis de nous éloigner. M. Cramer doit être transporté à Genève. Mille et mille tendres hommages, Monsieur.

N° CCXLI.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

Rolle, ce Jeudi.

MONSIEUR de Châteauneuf, Monsieur, a envoyé une addresse aux citoyens de Genève, dans laquelle, avec beaucoup de protestations pour la sureté des propriétés et des personnes, il assure qu'on se restreindra seulement à la punition des magistrats, qui ont osé solliciter le secours des Suisses. L'indignation a été à son comble, comme vous devez bien le penser; et mon cœur en est encore agité. Les magistrats, par une conduite aussi noble que celle du résident étoit basse et odieuse, ont rassemblé en armes trois mille Genevois, et leur ont lu cette addresse et une courageuse réponse. Ils ont demandé que ceux qui n'approuvoient pas la conduite des magistrats, eussent à se retirer; trois seulement sont sortis des rangs. M. le Sindic Michely a parlé comme Démosthène; et un citoyen nommé M. Chambrier, a répondu au nom du peuple avec tant de vertu et de sensibilité, que cette scène touchante peut être comparée aux plus belles de l'histoire. L'on ne nous mande pas d'ailleurs que les troupes soient augmentées. Dieu seul sçait à présent quel sera le résultat de toutes ces démarches extraordinaires. Nous attendons incessamment Monsieur Gibbon, et nous l'aimons, en attendant, de tout notre cœur, et pour jamais.

C. N.

N°

N° CCXLII.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Copet, ce 15 Juin, 1792.

NE craignez rien, Monsieur; ce n'est pas un reproche que je viens vous faire: je sçais depuis Alcibiade, que les hommes distingués doivent toujours avoir quelques légères bisarreries: M. de Severy m'écrit ingénieusement que vous me tenez compte en amitié du silence que vous gardez avec moi; car vos affections ne sont pas comme votre génie, une corne d'abondance, qui s'accroit en se répandant. Penseriez-vous, Monsieur, que ce préambule tend à vous demander une lettre? M. Pictet m'apprend que M. de Severy recevra chez lui pendant quinze jours le Prince de Hesse, et ses deux gouverneurs. Nous avions déterminé M. et Madame Pictet à admettre ces étrangers dans leur intérieur, si l'on le désiroit; et rien ne paroissoit plus convenable pour le jeune prince que le spectacle de cette vie pure et simple, dont l'esprit et le sentiment font la seule élégance; et d'ailleurs nous croyons voir dans cet arrangement, des avantages réciproques. Cependant une introduction de confiance demande l'exemption entière de certains défauts; par exemple, si vous apperceviez de légers Germanismes, comme des libations libérales à Bacchus, je vous demanderois d'avoir la bonté de me l'insinuer sans craindre aucunes tracasseries. Il seroit aisé de trouver des prétextes pour revenir à l'ancien plan de simple locataire.

Nous pensons souvent, Monsieur, aux jours pleins de charmes que nous avons passés avec vous à Genève. J'ai éprouvé pendant cette époque un sentiment nouveau pour moi, et peut-être pour beaucoup de gens. Je réunissois dans un même lieu, et par une faveur bien rare de la Providence, une des douces et pures affections de ma jeunesse, avec celle qui fait mon sort sur la terre, et qui le rend si digne d'envie. Cette singularité, jointe aux agrémens d'une conversation sans modèle, composoit pour moi une sorte d'enchantement; et la connection du passé et du présent rendoit mes jours semblables à un songe sorti par la porte d'ivoire pour consoler les mortels. Ne voudriez-vous pas nous le faire continuer encore? Copet est dans toute sa beauté; mais je ne sçais, si je dois trop insister, car nous y menons une vie assez solitaire; les circonstances retiennent les Genevois dans leurs foyers, et leurs campagnes sont désertes; M. de Germani même a jugé à-propos de se remarier; et il a bien fallu céder une grande part de ses soins. Gardez-vous, Monsieur, de former un de ces liens tardifs: le mariage qui rend heureux dans l'âge mûr, c'est celui qui fut contracté dans la jeunesse. Alors seulement la réunion est parfaite, les goûts se communiquent, les sentimens se répandent, les idées deviennent communes, les facultés intellectuelles se modèlent mutuellement. Toute la vie est double, et toute la vie est une prolongation de la jeunesse; car les impressions de l'ame commandent aux yeux, et la beauté qui n'est

plus

plus conserve encore son empire ; mais pour vous, Monsieur, dans toute la vigueur de la pensée, lorsque toute l'existence est décidée, l'on ne pourroit sans un miracle trouver une femme digne de vous ; et une association d'un genre imparfait rappelle toujours la statue d'Horace, qui joint à une belle tête le corps d'un stupide poisson. Vous êtes marié avec la gloire ; et vos amis qui vous chérissent, ne sont pas jaloux de ce lien, dont l'éclat même rejaillit sur eux. J'ai pensé cent fois à la confidence que vous m'avez faite ; j'en attends l'exécution avec un intérêt inexprimable ; votre genre d'esprit en fera un genre nouveau ; vous déroberez toutes les richesses de votre siècle ; et vous avez trouvé le véritable aimant qui retient dans son atmosphère tout ce qui s'en approche, et qui est digne d'y être attiré. Adieu, Monsieur ; personne au monde n'a mieux senti que vous le prix de cette association unique de l'esprit le plus brillant et le plus varié au plus doux et au plus égal de tous les caractères ; et l'on peut bien dire de vous ce que Cicéron disoit des lettres, également délicieuses dans la retraite et dans le grand monde, à Paris et à Copet. Recevez, Monsieur, l'assurance de tous les sentimens que vous nous avez inspirés. Je vous prie, Monsieur, de remercier M. de Severy de son obligeante lettre, et de faire agréer nos hommages à toute sa famille.

N° CCXLIII.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Copet, ce 5 Juillet, 1792.

JE n'aurois pas répondu sitôt, Monsieur, à votre charmante lettre, et j'aurois fait ce sacrifice de mon goût à votre douce paresse, si je n'avois eu à vous entretenir du nouvel ouvrage que M. Necker vous envoye. Son ame, infatigable en pensées comme en sentimens, est continuellement tourmentée par les malheurs de la France. Il a cru en trouver la cause et il a regardé comme un devoir de la lui révéler, et de lui montrer en même temps le modèle qu'elle auroit dû suivre. Quand vous n'auriez pas eu, Monsieur, des droits à jamais chéris sur tous les mouvemens de notre ame, M. Necker auroit dû également vous faire hommage de son travail: comment penser à la gloire et au bonheur de l'Angleterre sans que votre idée se présente à nous? comment remarquer les lumières répandues dans le travail de M. Necker sans se rappeller des conversations intéressantes, qui ont charmé mes douleurs l'hiver dernier, en me faisant jouir à la fois de tous mes goûts, et de tous mes sentimens? Le sujet de ce livre me paroit entièrement neuf, quoiqu'il ait été approché mille fois par nos orateurs, par ces navigateurs qui rament sans cesse et qui n'abordent jamais, parcequ'ils n'ont aucune boussole. Je ne veux pas anticiper sur votre jugement; l'amour propre n'a plus la hardiesse de se montrer aujourd'hui; les circonstances sont trop graves

graves pour ne pas étouffer toutes les petites passions des hommes; il *pleut du sang*, comme dit la Fontaine, et les colombes ne doivent plus penser qu'à chercher à faire la paix entre les vautours, dussent-elles être victimes de leur bonté, comme dans cette fable. Seulement nous prenons devous le présage, comme les Romains le tiroient du vol d'un aigle pour augurer favorablement de quelque grande entreprise.

M. Necker lit actuellement votre histoire avec délices; il se délasse en se promenant dans cet Elisée; il me répétoit hier ce que vous disiez du gouvernement établie par Auguste: une monarchie déguisée en république, et nous faisons, ajoutoit-il, une république déguisée en monarchie. Voilà, pensai-je, ma chatte changée en femme. M. Necker admire sans cesse la beauté de vos récits, mais cependant, il se saisit avec transport de la première idée analogue aux siennes.

Venez à Copet, Monsieur, si vous voulez qu'on bêche, et qu'on joue au wisk, car vous savez donner aux goûts innocens l'éclat du génie, comme aux travaux du génie la douceur qui les rapproche de l'innocence. Venez à Copet, pourvu que notre bonheur ne coute rien au vôtre; mais si l'habitude nous est contraire, elle peut aussi nous être favorable, car le rapport des ames et des esprits ressemble bien à l'habitude, et c'est du moins un de ses effets les plus doux; et une liaison, qui a commencé presque avec la pensée, est préférable à celle qu'on forme avec ses meubles et ses appartemens. Mais vous avez de meilleures excuses; je

reçois avec reconnoissance celle des eaux de Pyrmont. Quel prix mon cœur n'attache-t-il point à votre santé, à l'intérêt que votre amitié répand sur notre retraite? En arrivant ici, en n'y retrouvant que les tombeaux de ceux que j'ai tant aimé, vous avez été pour moi comme un arbre solitaire, dont l'ombre couvre encore le désert qui me sépare des premières années de ma vie.

Je ne voudrois pas non plus vous ravir aux agrémens d'une société à laquelle la France de Louis quatorze auroit porté envie!

Engagez ces dames à lire le Tableau de l'Etat Moral où nous a reduit la Constitution Françoise; et si la modestie des femmes pour leur mari n'étoit pas un hommage à l'intimité du nœud conjugal, je dirois que dans ce chapitre, l'auteur met son esprit au niveau du génie, qui a conçu l'ensemble de l'ouvrage.

Vous m'aviez promis de lire *Les Opinions Religieuses;* et quelles que soyent vos opinions métaphysiques, je suis sûre que vous aurez été frappé du chapitre sur le bonheur, le mot si touchant qui finit votre lettre me le persuade; je veux y joindre ces vers de Zaïre.

Généreux, bienfaisant, juste, plein de vertus,
S'il étoit né Chrétien, que seroit-il de plus?

N° CCXLIV.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Copet, le 10 Août, 1792.

JE ne puis, Monsieur, laisser sans remercîmens, non seulement une lettre incomparable, mais beaucoup

coup plus qu'une lettre pour moi, car c'est un véritable bienfait de l'amitié. Le plaisir qu'elle a causé à M. Necker ne s'effacera point de mon souvenir. Votre voix peut ranimer toutes les espérances: et quand vos écrits, votre réputation, ne nous auroient pas appris depuis long tems quel juge vous êtes, la manière dont vous énoncez votre suffrage feroit également votre titre et le nôtre; et le goût exquis qui démêle le mérite d'un ouvrage, et qui le met à sa place, peut bien être comparé à la sagacité d'un juge civil, qui liroit au fond des cœurs pour prononcer *guilty*, ou *not guilty*, mortel ou immortel. Aussi M. Necker après avoir entendu cette douce lettre, me dit avec sa bonne foi ordinaire, A présent me voilà sûr de mon succès; je n'ai plus besoin d'aucun autre éloge. Il sentoit que son vaisseau alloit voguer à pleines voiles, comme celui d'Enée, quand il fut poussé par cette nymphe que Virgile nomme

——— **fandi doctissima Cymodocea**
Dixerat, et dextrâ discedens impulit altam
(Haud ignara modi) puppim: fugit illa per undas
Ocior et jaculo.

J'aurois voulu oser faire imprimer cette lettre; l'opinion de celui qui a démêlé à dix huit cens ans de distance les causes de la décadence de l'empire Romain auroit été la sanction du livre de M. Necker. C'est sur tout à vous, Monsieur, qu'il faut reprocher l'enthousiasme de M. Necker pour votre nation; c'est sur l'échantillon qu'il a jugé de l'ensemble, et non seulement vous, mais aussi vos réponses à toutes ses questions ont fait son erreur;

ces questions ont dû vous prouver que M. Necker ne cherchoit point à vous cacher son travail; mais l'on peut bien s'aider des lumières de son ami, et lui épargner par respect pour son génie le spectacle dont parle Boileau, *Enfant au premier acte, et barbon au dernier.* Il faut, comme vous l'observez avec beaucoup de grace et de finesse, que les pensées ingénieuses rendues clairement, puissent obtenir place au milieu des simples vérités; et M. Necker a fait, je l'avoue, le contraire des gens d'esprit, dont parle M. de Buffon; il a réuni toutes ces feuilles d'or pour en faire des lingots, ces lingots sont, dites-vous, *d'airain de Corinthe;* il faut donc toujours une incendie pour en produire de pareils. Hélas! il n'est que trop vrai; l'ame de M. Necker est embrasée par la douleur des événemens, et j'ai besoin de toutes les ressources de l'amitié la plus tendre pour faire diversion aux tourmens qu'il endure. Votre conversation me donnera des moyens en ce genre, auxquels il est impossible de résister; cependant votre bonheur m'est trop cher pour que je voulusse vous faire perdre aucun des instans de la société dont vous jouissez. Revenez à nous quand vous serez rendu à vous-même; c'est le moment qui doit toujours appartenir *à votre première et à votre dernière amie,* je ne saurois découvrir encore lequel de ces deux titres est le plus doux et le plus cher à mon cœur.

N°

N° CCXLV.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Copet, ce 21 Septembre, 1792.

JAMAIS, Monsieur, les marques de votre intérêt ne nous furent ni plus chères ni plus nécessaires. Les lettres qu'on reçoit de Paris font horreur, même avant de les ouvrir. Les mots les plus indifférens de nos amis absens paroissent des augures funestes. M. de Lenart écrivoit dernièrement à Mr. Necker, *quel que soit mon sort, je vivrai, ou je mourrai votre ami:* ces paroles si simples nous firent tressaillir, et le plus cruel des événemens n'a pas tardé à les suivre. M. de Montmorin a péri malgré les efforts de Bazire lui-même, car dans cet enfer il faut avoir recours à la protection des démons. Les barbares ont tué M. de Clermont Tonnerre, exemplaire vivant du génie et des talens des François avant leur effrayante métamorphose. Ils ont assassiné le Duc de Rochefoucault, cet homme rare, victime de ses vertus même dans ses erreurs, qui guidé par une seule lumière, ne put balancer un grand caractère par un grand génie. Il n'avoit vu dans un système exagéré que le sacrifice de ses avantages personnels, et il s'étoit crû obligé de l'embrasser; aussi avoit-il conservé presque seul l'amour et le respect des deux partis. Tous ces hommes distingués étoient nos amis, ou nos connoissances; ils contribuoient tous à la douceur de notre vie, et nous ne pouvons plus jouir même d'un souvenir si cher, sans traverser dans notre imagination le fleuve de sang qui nous en sépare.

Au

Au milieu de ces malheurs, l'arrivée de l'ambassadrice nous a soulagé d'un poids terrible; le sentiment de ses dangers, nous fait oublier la déraison qui les avoit fait naître; mais malgré sa grossesse et ses allarmes précédentes, le repos auquel nous la contraignons, n'a pas pour elle tout l'attrait que vous imaginez. Elle ressemble à ces papillons éphémères, si bien décrits par votre poëte Gray, qui ne comptent jamais leur vie que par le lever et le coucher du soleil.

Je suis douloureusement affectée de la maladie de M. de Sévéry; je désire la conservation de cet excellent homme, pour le bonheur d'une femme digne de tous les genres de bonheur, pour sa famille, pour tous ceux qui le connoissent, et pour vous, Monsieur, dont les peines pénètrent jusques au fond de mon cœur. Je n'espère pas de vous voir ici dans ce moment; mais souvenez-vous, que nous vous avons réservé deux appartemens sous votre nom, l'un à Copet, l'autre à Genève; souvenez-vous que votre société répand mille charmes sur la nôtre, et qu'elle ne change d'ailleurs en rien notre genre de vie; c'est un bien précieux sans aucune soustraction.

N° CCXLVI.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Rolle, ce 8 Octobre, 1792.

Nous sommes à peu près, Monsieur, dans la position où vous nous avez laissés; pleins de reconnoisance pour vos bontés, et d'inquiétude pour nos deux

deux patries. Monsieur de Montesquiou est toujours à Carouge, mais avec les trois Commissaires. Ce général, quoiqu'on ait pu vous dire, est un homme accessible à tous les sentimens doux et à tous les penchans aimables; mais ce Dubois de Crancé lui fera la loi, et je ne vois plus en Monsieur de Montesquiou qu'une ombre avec Cerbère à ses côtés. L'on dit que Spire est pris par Monsieur de Custine; l'on dit aussi que la réponse de Monsieur de Montesquiou aux Genevois est une injonction positive d'éloigner les troupes Suisses, et une menace de se consulter avec le général la Fevrières. Pour moi, si la Providence nous conduit à Zurich, je ne redouterai ni l'Allemagne ni les frimats, pourvu que je jouisse en repos, auprés d'un bon feu, de l'attachement de Monsieur Necker, et du charme inexprimable de votre société.

Employez, Monsieur, toute votre éloquence à rendre graces à vos excellens amis, qui nous ont accordé un si bon asile, et donnez-moi, je vous conjure, des nouvelles de Monsieur de Sévery.

Il paroît que la Convention Nationale se mêle malheureusement de nos affaires, et qu'elle a passé un décret pour ordonner à Monsieur de Montesquiou de s'emparer de toutes les villes et de toutes les contrées qui pourroient servir à la conservation de la Savoye.

N° CCXLVII.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Rolle, ce 11 Novembre, 1792.

Nous sommes encore à Rolle, Monsieur; les affaires de Genève traînent en longueur; il semble qu'on crée les obstacles, car toute la discussion se borne en demandes de la Convention Nationale, et en consentement de notre part; cependant les couriers se succèdent, et l'on ne sçait quand la ratification arrivera. Mais la négociation avec les Bernois paroît prendre une tournure très favorable, et nous sommes presque déterminés à retourner à Copet, en conservant encore cependant la jouissance de la maison de Madame de Sévéry, si elle veut bien le permettre; car je voudrois avoir la possibilité de revenir ici à la moindre inquiétude; en attendant c'est Cabanis qui nous force à nous rapprocher. Dans ces vacillations je n'ose vous proposer indiscrétement un nouveau voyage; j'attendrai que nous ayons un lieu pour nous reposer. C'est donc de vous que nous tiendrons la branche d'olivier, ou c'est avec vous que nous fuirons les lauriers de Mars. Je sens vivement le prix des soins que vous avez daigné nous rendre, et c'est à regret que j'ai laissé dernièrement à Monsieur Necker celui de vous apprendre les événemens; nouveau Diogène, il fuit ordinairement tous les rapports directs, et il me laisse le soin de les soutenir. Vous êtes la seule exception que je lui ai vu faire, et je n'en suis pas surprise; aux charmes, à la douceur féconde de votre conversation, il vous

a pris

a pris pour un rayon de soleil qu'il n'a pas voulu que je lui interceptasse. Adieu, Monsieur, nous nous trouvons heureux d'habiter le même pays que vous. Je m'acquitterai avec Madame de Sévéry à la première occasion; puis-je vous demander des nouvelles de votre excellent ami?

N° CCXLVIII.

The Same to the Same.

Rolle, 29 Novembre, 1792.

Monsieur Necker est si reconnoissant de la charmante lettre de Monsieur Gibbon et si effrayé en prenant la plume par le souvenir du passé, qu'elle tombe de ses mains; elles sont en effet plus habiles à manier la foudre que des armes légères; il veut donc que je dise pour lui à Monsieur Gibbon combien il a été ravi de la plus ingénieuse des allusions, car je me suis hâtée de traduire les vers dans la crainte qu'il ne lut *trompette blessée* comme le soldat du déserteur. Cette citation d'Ovide me feroit trembler si j'étois superstitieuse; le sort de Sémélé seroit d'un mauvaise augure, mais heureusement le génie de Monsieur Gibbon, qui embrasse si bien le passé, n'est pas encore initié dans les mystères de l'avenir: cet avenir et la postérité sont pour lui ce qu'est à un grand roi les contrées éloignées d'un vaste empire; il y domine en maître, mais il ne les connoît pas.

Le succès de Monsieur Necker n'est pas encore complet, puisqu'il lui faudroit avec votre suffrage, le changement du cœur des François; mais il est impossible

impossible cependant de ne pas concevoir quelque espérance: la quantité des contrefaçons remplies de fautes, met l'*auteur* au supplice; car Messieurs, quoiqu'on fasse, ce caractère d'auteur est indélébile, et l'emblême du lit de roses vous convient mieux qu'à l'amour même.

Nous sommes plus tranquilles, ou peut-être nous sommes fatigués d'avoir peur; il paroît cependant que le Lion dédaigne d'écraser la Souris. Nous attendrons des nouvelles plus positives avant de retourner à Genève. Vous me rendriez bien heureuse si vous vous contentiez d'une chambre à la Couronne, et vous pourriez donner un rendezvous à Monsieur d'Erlach, qui doit venir dîner avec nous. L'Ambassadrice vous a écrit, mais Monsieur Necker a craint qu'elle ne vous eut pas assez parlé de lui; il a raison peut-être; à l'age de ma fille l'on court pour soi dans la carrière de la vie; au mien, l'on se plait comme les guides dont parle Homère à s'asseoir sur le char du héros, à courir les mêmes dangers, sans avoir part à sa gloire. Adieu, Monsieur, chacun vous aime ici, et chacun vous regrette et vous souhaite.

Supposé que nous restassions encore quelque tems à Rolle, Monsieur de Sévéry nous permettroit-il de mettre nos chevaux dans son écurie? Ils ont été à l'auberge jusques à présent.

Nous prions tous Monsieur Gibbon de nous donner des nouvelles de Monsieur de Sévéry.

N°

N° CCXLIX.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Rolle, ce 2 Janvier, 1793.

LES défauts les plus enracinés souffrent quelques exceptions; je vous conjure, Monsieur, d'en faire une en notre faveur par deux lignes seulement. Je pense continuellement, et avec une douloureuse inquiétude, ou que vous avez la goutte, ou que vous êtes plongé dans la tristesse par la continuité d'un spectacle qui tourmente votre excellent cœur. Si le temps ne vous effrayoit pas, je vous proposerois de mettre un peu d'intervalle à ces soins de l'amitié en venant partager d'autres peines sur lesquelles le charme de votre conversation versera un beaume incomparable. Votre chambre n'est plus occupée; après avoir essayé inutilement toutes les ressources de l'esprit et de la raison, pour détourner ma fille d'un projet insensé, nous crûmes qu'un petit séjour à Genève pourroit la rendre plus docile par l'influence de l'opinion. Elle a profité de cette liberté, et s'est mise en route plutôt qu'elle ne nous l'avoit fait craindre; et c'est sous de si facheux auspices qu'elle a commencé l'année, et qu'elle nous la fait commencer. Je n'ajoute rien de plus; il ne m'appartient pas d'être juge de cette conduite; j'aurois besoin d'un intermédiaire et même d'un interprète entre le siècle et moi: car je n'entends plus sa langue, et malgré tout le dédain avec lequel on rejette les opinions qui ont guidé et embelli ma vie, je m'apperçois souvent qu'elles

qu'elles répandent encore quelques fleurs, même sur mes cheveux blancs.

Le procès du roi nous laisse toujours dans une triste suspension; M. Necker n'ose se livrer à l'espérance. Louis Seize n'est pas pour lui ce qu'il est pour les autres hommes, et toutes les idées qu'il a conçues pendant vingt ans l'attachent à ce centre, peut être comme la vigne à un arbre stérile. Mais il ne fait pas cette dernière observation. Venez, Monsieur, et croyez que vous êtes plus aimé ici que dans aucun pays du monde.

N° CCL.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Copet, ce 12 Juillet, 1793.

Vous m'annonciez de Douvres, Monsieur, une lettre par le courier prochain; je l'attends encore et chaque jour avec plus d'angoisse. Je me consume en conjectures inquiétantes. Il faut être juste; vous ne pouvez penser à nous aussi souvent, que nous vous rapprochons de notre cœur. A Londres tout vous ramène aux idées de ce monde, tandis que tout nous en éloigne ici; près de vous les souvenirs que vous me rappelliez m'étoient doux, et les idées présentes que vous faisiez naître s'y réunissoient sans peine; l'enchaînement d'un grand nombre d'années sembloit faire toucher tous les tems l'un à l'autre, avec une rapidité électrique; vous étiez à la fois pour moi à vingt ans, et à cinquante: loin de vous, les différens lieux que j'ai habités ne sont plus que les pierres itinéraires de

de ma vie: ils m'avertissent de tous les milles que j'ai déjà parcourus. M. Necker, plus raisonnable, s'est fait taupe, ne pouvant plus être lynx. Il s'occupe d'agriculture, il étend ou il resserre son compas, et mesure successivement l'espace qui nous sépare du ciel, et l'arpent de terre de son parc. Voilà du moins comment il conduit son esprit; on l'amuse comme un enfant, ou comme un ange, parcequ'il tient de tous les deux; mais rien ne le distrait cependant des sentimens douloureux qu'on renouvelle sans cesse dans son ame tendre: il faut avoir aimé pour sentir tous les déchiremens que cause l'ingratitude. Nous sommes occupés à présent à réclamer nos deux millions confiés depuis quinze ans à la France par les motifs les plus délicats, et engagés pendant un tems pour lui fournir des subsistances. L'on nous en a refusé l'intérêt quoiqu'en assignats. Ah, c'est bien aussi en France, qu'on entend les *hiboux chanter des hymnes à la nuit, et à la mort; et qu'on voit les arraignées couvrir les monumens des beaux arts;* aussi M. Necker en sa qualité de Colombe doit être banni de tous les cœurs françois: il doit céder la place aux Vautours. Vous voyez que l'affaire de M. d'Apples ne vous auroit pas convenu dans cette circonstance; mais nous n'avions rien chez lui, et j'aurois désiré que vous m'eussiez dit précisément votre perte. Quant à la maison, la cause que nous plaidons nous oblige à suspendre tous nos arrangemens: notre vie est comme flottante au gré de tous les vents: mais ils ne me feront jamais perdre de vue l'étoile polaire de la place

St. François, qui nous indique le port, et tous les biens dont il est embelli. Vous souviendrez-vous à Londres du projet que vous aviez formé à Genève? C'étoit un centre auquel tous les événemens du siècle pouvoient aboutir, comme dans Lucien toutes les prières aboutirent à l'oreille de Jupiter; jamais on n'eut plus que vous le talent de peindre vivement sans exagérer. Le fond de votre sujet auroit aussi un avantage unique: vous traceriez le Tableau de la Nature Humaine comme Montagne, mais dans un point de vue et avec un modèle différent; ainsi vous en ferez appercevoir toute l'harmonie, quand il en faisoit entendre toutes les discordances; et vous puiseriez dans cette corne d'abondance que vous avez déjà fait reparoître, et qu'on n'ose plus reléguer dans les fables; enfin vous vous garantiriez de ses mains mal habiles, plus funestes que la faux du tems, qui retranche quelquefois, mais ne défigure jamais.

J'espère, Monsieur, que vous aurez trouvé Milord Sheffield dans une situation d'ame plus calme, et votre amitié par les sentimens les plus doux achevera l'ouvrage de ses réflexions. Combien de fois nous avons senti cette influence, M. Necker et moi! et qu'il est délicieux pour mon cœur de doubler ainsi mon attachement pour vous par celui que vous inspirez à M. Necker! Adieu, Monsieur, j'espère que cette lettre y croisera la vôtre: il est essentiel pour nos arrangemens d'apprendre bientôt de vous. Si vous passez l'hiver en Angleterre, dites, je vous prie, à votre hôte excellent

lent et distingué, toute la part que nous avons prise à sa douleur.

Puis-je vous demander sans indiscrétion de vous informer s'il existe une traduction du Pouvoir Exécutif; et, en ce cas, auriez-vous la bonté de me la faire parvenir?

La mère des Gracques est ici avec ses jolis enfans, et son mari, pour lequel j'ai beaucoup d'affection: cette moderne Cornélie ajouteroit volontiers, pour plaire à M. Gibbon, quelque chose de plus à sa parure que le mérite de ses deux fils.

N° CCLI.

Madame NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

A Lausanne, ce 9 Décembre, 1793.

JE ne puis vous exprimer, Monsieur, quel a été mon saisissement aux nouvelles si imprévues que nous avons reçues de vous; en vain M. de Sévéry les a-t-il environnées de toutes les moralités, qui pouvoient donner le change à nos tristes pensées; votre courage, votre gaieté, votre aménité; toutes ces qualités si aimables dans d'autres temps pèsent sur mon cœur avec les autres motifs que j'ai de vous chérir. Le crépuscule de notre vie est bien couvert de nuages, puisque l'amitié même, la douce amitié, auprès de laquelle nous trouvions un asile, nous présente actuellement un centre de douleur, qui retentit dans toutes les parties de mon être. Je ne vous dirai rien de plus, Monsieur; ma foiblesse s'accorde mal avec votre héroïsme, et c'est seulement en vous parlant de vous, que nous pou-

vons cesser de nous entendre. Nous sommes à Lausanne; nous vous y regrettons au lever de l'aurore, et sur tout au coucher du soleil: car c'est alors que nous étions habitués à vous voir rentrer dans notre ruche solitaire, chargé du miel que vous aviez recueilli au dehors, mais plus riche encore de celui qui couloit de vos lèvres. Cependant je m'applaudis d'être ici à portée d'avoir de vos nouvelles; j'ai vu votre dernier bulletin, et j'espère que vous continuerez avec la même exactitude, car vous savez combien vos amis souffrent, et vous n'avez rien de cette nature de tigre, qui nous est devenue si familière.

Nous avons renoncé à Genève; cette petite ville marche en tout sur les traces de la France, et les pigmées n'inspirent que le mépris, quand ils imitent les gestes épouvantables des géans briarées. Cette coupable parodie perd, pour jamais peut-être, une ville autrefois si florissante; l'on y égalise les fortunes par des collectes perpetuelles, comme on le fait en France par des confiscations; d'ailleurs, l'on ne dira plus, je ne décide point entre Genève et Rome, mais entre Hobbes et Spinosa; l'auteur des Opinions Religieuses avoit trop prévu cette funeste révolution plus terrible que toutes les autres, en ce qu'elle donne le même mauvais esprit aux deux partis opposés. Vous le voyez, Monsieur: je viens de faire un effort pour me détourner du sujet qui dans ce moment me captive toute entière; mais cette espèce de dissimulation coute à ma plume, et je l'abandonne de nouveau aux tendres vœux, que

nous

nous faisons en votre faveur, et au sentiment qui attache pour jamais mon ame à la vôtre.

N° CCLII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Mrs.* GIBBON, Bath.

MY DEAREST MADAM, Lausanne, Aug. 1st, 1792.

THE extraordinary state of public affairs in France opposes an insuperable bar to my passage; and every prudent stranger will avoid that inhospitable land, in which a people of slaves is suddenly become a nation of tyrants and cannibals. The German road is indeed safe, but, independent of a great addition of fatigue and expense, the armies of Austria and Prussia now cover that frontier; and though the generals are polite, and the troops well disciplined, I am not desirous of passing through the clouds of hussars and pandours that attend their motions. These public reasons are fortified by some private motives, and to this delay I resign myself, with a sigh for the present, and a hope for the future.

What a strange wild world do we live in! You will allow me to be a tolerable historian, yet, on a fair review of ancient and modern times, I can find none that bear any affinity with the present. My knowledge of your discerning mind, and my recollection of your political principles, assure me, that you are no more a *democrat* than myself. Had the French improved their glorious opportunity to erect a free constitutional monarchy on the ruins of arbitrary power and the Bastile, I should ap-

plaud their generous effort; but this total subversion of all rank, order, and government could be productive only of a popular monster, which, after devouring every thing else, must finally devour itself. I was once apprehensive that this monster would propagate some imps in our happy island, but they seem to have been crushed in their cradle; and I acknowledge with pleasure and pride the good sense of the English nation, who seem truly conscious of the blessings which they enjoy: and I am happy to find that the most respectable part of Opposition has cordially joined in the support of "things as they are." Even this country has been somewhat tainted with the democratical infection; the vigilance of government has been exerted, the malecontents have been awed, the misguided have been undeceived, the fever in the blood has gradually subsided, and I flatter myself that we have secured the tranquil enjoyment of obscure felicity, which we had been almost tempted to despise.

You have heard, most probably, from Mrs. Holroyd,* of the long-expected though transient satisfaction which I received from the visit of Lord Sheffield's family. He appeared highly satisfied with my arrangements here, my house, garden, and situation, at once in town and country, which are indeed singular in their kind, and which have often made me regret the impossibility of shewing them to my dearest friend of the Belvidere. Lord Sheffield is still, and will ever continue, the same

* Of Bath.

active

active being; always employed for himself, his friends, and the public, and always persuading himself that he wishes for leisure and repose. He has now a new care on his hands, the management and disposal of his eldest daughter, who is indeed a most extraordinary young woman. There are various roads to happiness; but when I compare his situation with mine, I do not, upon the whole, repent that I have given the preference to a life of celibacy and retirement. Although I have been long a spectator of the great world, my unambitious temper has been content with the occupations and rewards of study; and although my library be still my favourite room, I am now no longer stimulated by the prosecution of any literary work. Adieu, dear Madam; may every blessing that nature can allow be attendant on your latter season. Your age and my habits will not permit a very close correspondence; but I wish to hear, and I *presume* to ask, a speedy *direct* account of your own situation. May it be such as I shall hear with pleasure! Once more adieu; I live in hopes of embracing you next summer at the Belvidere, but you may be assured that I bring over nothing for the press.

N° CCLIII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Hon. Lady* ELIZABETH FOSTER, at Florence.

Lausanne, November 8th, 1792.

I REMEMBER it has been observed of Augustus and Cromwell, that they should never have been

born, or never have died; and I am sometimes tempted to apply the same remark to certain beings of a softer nature, who, after a short residence on the banks of the Leman Lake, are now flown far away over the Alps and the Appenines, and have abandoned their votaries to the insipidity of common life. The remark, however, would be unreasonable, and the sentiment ungrateful. The pleasures of the summer, the lighter and the graver moments of the society of *petit Ouchy*,* are indeed past, perhaps never to return; but the remembrance of that delightful period is itself a pleasure, and I enjoy, I cherish the flattering persuasion that it is remembered with some satisfaction in the gallery of Florence, as well as in *the library* of Lausanne. Long before we were reduced to seek a refuge from the savages of Gaul, I had secretly indulged the thought, or at least the wish, of asking leave to attend *mes bonnes amies* over Mount Cenis, of basking once more in an Italian sun, and of paying once more my devotions to the Apollo of the Vatican. But my aged and gouty limbs would have failed me in the bold attempt of scaling St. Bernard, and I wanted patience to undertake the circumitineration of the Tirol. Your return to the Pays de Vaud next summer I hold to be extremely doubtful; but my anxiety on that head is somewhat diminished by the sure and cer-

* A beautiful villa near the lake, about a mile from Lausanne, where the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Elizabeth Foster resided.

tain

tain hope of our all meeting in England the ensuing winter. I flatter myself that the Porter of Devonshire-house will not be inexorable; yet I am afraid of losing you amidst the smoke and tumult of fashionable London, in which the night is devoted to pleasure and the morning to sleep. My ambition may perhaps aspire to pass some hours in the palladian Chiswick, or even some days at Chatsworth; but these princely mansions will not recal the freedom, the ease, the *primitive* solitude of dear little Ouchy. Indeed! indeed! your fair friend was made for something better than a Duchess.

Although you most magnanimously abandoned us in the crisis of our fate, yet as you seem to interest yourself in the hopes and fears of this little country, it is my duty to inform you, that we still hang in a state of suspense; inclining, however, to the side of hope, rather than of despair. The garrison, and even the bourgeoisie, of Geneva shewed a vigorous resolution of defending the city; and our frontiers have been gradually covered with fifteen thousand intrepid Swiss. But the threats of a bombardment, the weight of expense, and above all, the victorious ascendant of the French republic, have abated much of the first heroic ardour. Monsieur de Montesquiou displayed a pacific, and even yielding, temper; and a treaty was signed, dismissing the Swiss garrison from Geneva, and removing the French troops to the distance of ten leagues. But this last condition, which is indeed objectionable, displeased the Convention,

vention, who refused to ratify the agreement. New conferences were held, new messengers have been dispatched; but unless they are determined to find or to make a subject of quarrel, it is probable that we shall purchase peace by submission. As Geneva has a very dangerous democratical party within her walls, and as the national guards are already allowed to enter the city, and to tamper with the inhabitants and the garrison, I will not ensure that poor little republic from one week to another. For ourselves, the approaches of danger must be more gradual. I think we are now safe for this winter, and I no longer run to the window to see whether the French are coming. But with so many enemies without, and so many within, the government of Berne, and the tranquillity of this happy country, will be suspended by a very slender twig; and I begin to fear that Satan will drive me out of the possession of Paradise. My only comfort will be, that I shall have been expelled by the power, and not seduced by the arts, of the blackest dæmon in hell, the dæmon of democracy. Where indeed will this tremendous inundation, this conspiracy of numbers against rank and property, be finally stopped? Europe seems to be universally tainted, and wherever the French can light a match, they may blow up a mine. Our only hope is now in their devouring one another; they are furious and hungry monsters, and war is almost declared between the Convention and the city of Paris, between the moderate republicans and the absolute levellers. A majority

jority of the Convention wishes to spare the royal victims, but they must yield to the rage of the people and the thirst of popularity, and a few hours may produce a trial, a sentence, and a guillotine. Mr. Necker is publishing a pamphlet in defence of the august sufferers; but his feeble and tardy efforts will rather do credit to himself, than service to his clients. You kindly ask after the situation of poor Severy. Alas! it is now hopeless; all his complaints are increased, all his resources are exhausted; where nature cannot work, the effect of art is vain, and his best friends begin to wish him a quiet release. His wife, I had almost said his widow, is truly an object of compassion. The dragoon is returned for a few days; and if his domestic sorrows gave him leave, he would almost regret the want of an occasion to deserve his feather and cockade. Your note has been communicated to Madame de Montolieu; but as she is engaged with a dying aunt, I have not yet seen her. Madame Dagaisseau has hastily left us; the last decrees seemed to give the *emigrés* only the option of starving abroad or hanging at home; yet she has ventured into France, on some faint glimpse of clemency for the women and children. Madame de Bouillon does not appear to move. Madame de Staël, whom I saw last week at Rolle, is still uncertain where she shall drop her burthen; but she must soon resolve, for the young lady or gentleman is at the door;

—— Demanding life, impatient for the skies.

By

By this time you have joined the Ladies Spencer and Duncannon, whom I beg leave to salute with the proper shades of respect and tenderness. You may, if you please *be, belle comme un ange*; but I do not like your comparison of the archangel. Those of Milton, with whom I am better acquainted at present than with Guido, are all masculine manly figures, with a great sword by their side, and six wings folding round them. The heathen goddesses would please me as little. Your friend is less severe than Minerva, more decent than Venus, less cold than Diana, and not quite so great a vixen as the ox-eyed Juno. To express that infallible mixture of grace, sweetness, and dignity, a new race of beings must be invented, and I am a mere prose narrator of matter of fact. Bess is much nearer the level of a mortal, but a mortal for whom the wisest man, historic or medical, would throw away two or three worlds, if he had them in his possession. From the aforesaid Bess I have received three marks of kind remembrance, from the foot of St. Bernard, with an exquisite monument of art and friendship, from Turin, and finally from Milan, with a most valuable insertion from the Duchess. At birds in the air it is difficult to take aim, and I fear or hope that I shall sustain some reproaches on your not finding this long epistle at Florence. I will mark it N° 1; and why should I despair of my future since I can say with truth, that since your departure I have not spent so agreeable a morning? To each of the dear

dear little Caro's pray deliver nine kisses for me, which shall be repaid on demand. My best compliments to Mr. Pelham, if he is with you.

N° CCLIV.

Sir JOHN MACPHERSON, *Bart. to* EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR, Munich, Dec. 4th, 1792.

I TOLD my friend Levade that I would give you some idea of my tour through Spain. It was interesting in a high degree. I landed at Malaga, where I found excellent grapes on the 20th of June: *Ille terrarum angulus ridet:* hills at a distance covered with snow; rich and unequal grounds, and the neighbourhood of the sea, without its offences, give the country every advantage: indeed it may be called a favoured land. You know that the Court of Spain are now employing antiquaries to examine the scenes of Roman and Carthaginian events in that neighbourhood, and with some classic care. From Malaga I went by sea to Gibraltar, where I passed some very agreeable days with Governor Boyd. He is in perfect possession of his faculties, as of the fortress, at ninety-six; and means to take his final repose in a tomb which he has secured in one of the Greek bastions, and which he visits and has kept clean with Chinese caution. The excavations and batteries formed within the solid rock of Gibraltar are so very grand that they vie with the caves of Staffa

Staffa and my native island.* I saw the Duke of Crillon afterwards at Madrid. Nature has not formed a stronger contrast than that of the rock of Hercules and its besieger. I went by land from Gibraltar to Cadiz, having been favoured with a particular passport for the purpose. Doctor Johnson and his friend Boswell could not have had a rougher path in the Hebrides, nor worse accommodations. But if the ground is rough, the sky is surely kinder in Spain; from the day of my arrival there to that of my departure I had but two showers of rain, one at San-il-Defonso, and the other at Madrid.

Cadiz is full of excellent houses, foreign merchants, and every species of wealth. The Governor of Cadiz told me that the last year's revenue of the custom-house was about four millions of hard dollars. You have got Townsend's Travels through Spain: they are very correct as far as I have followed him; and if you can get through his gypsum, ploughs, and poor-houses, you will not be displeased in their perusal. I had formed the highest opinion of Mr. Townsend's mineralogist-knowledge, till I met the celebrated Mr. Foster at Madrid. He was disposing of his famous collection to the King of Spain; and when I told him that I did not understand Mr. Townsend's details about the mineral composition of the hills and roads of Spain, he added that he should have been surprised if I had.

* The Isle of Sky.

Xeres,

Xeres, Seville, Cordova, &c. &c. in the road from Cadiz to Madrid:—all very ancient and interesting cities, and full of their ancient Roman and Moorish inhabitants. When one enters on the scene of Cervantes' romance, it is impossible not to be pleased. Both he and Le Sage have followed the exact geography of the country; and I confess I was almost as glad to see the present *Del Toboso* and *Segovia* as some parts of ancient Rome. Madrid is a very respectable city. All our ministers complain of the sharpness of its air. The late King of Spain used to say that its climate was

Nueve meses de *inverno*, y tres de *inferno*.

The Spanish language is so like the Italian, that I could, with very little aid, understand it as it is written by their classic authors. The progress in literature and the fine arts is very active at present in Spain. The court have permitted an extract of Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations to be published, though the original is condemned by the Inquisition. The reasons of the Inquisition are curious: "The lowness of its style and the looseness of the morals which it inculcates." The sentence of the Inquisition is always pasted up upon the church doors. I sought for your name without success; but you exist in Spain in many secret and select retreats.

I have the pleasure to tell you that Spain is regulating all her ancient documents of American and Arabic knowledge. A copy of a letter which Andrew Stuart, at the instigation of the Trustees of the

the British Museum, wrote to the Pope on the subject of the papers in the Vatican, was sent to me at Madrid. I gave it to our Minister and the Archbishop of Toledo, and we shall in time have a catalogue of the Spanish papers. I can also inform you that the Arabian Code is no fiction, as can be now perfectly established. The malice of a rival monk has, with that of some good Christian zealots at Rome, attacked the authenticity of the work. Sir William Hamilton and I have had proofs of its being a genuine work. The details are too long for a letter.

The Court is not splendid. The King has a great deal of the look and character of his brother of Naples. The etiquette of his palace forbids him to associate with almost any one familiarly. The Queen, you know, is all powerful; with strong traits of character, and governed by one passion, she has found the secret of governing all around her;—her husband through religion and love, and the rest through fear, hope, and the Inquisition.

The Conde de Aranda you have I suppose seen. He was very hospitable and civil to me; the King too was gracious. It would have made you smile to have seen your giant * surrounded by the little grandees of Spain. They are indeed a little race; but the great body of the nation have won my attachment and esteem. They are a decent, sincere, and dignified people. Except the bankers and lawyers in Madrid, and the commercial people in

* Mr. Gibbon used to call the writer the *Gentle Giant*.

the

the sea-ports, the people have not yet a taint of revolution-ideas. With the Countess de Aranda you would be in love. She is very like your nut-brown Sylva. There is a singular privilege in the house of her father; it is that he has a right to create a grandee of Spain of the first order. He generally makes his son.

Poor Florida Blanca is in prison on the frontiers of France, and nearly in the same strict custody with that which our friend Gil Blas suffered at Segovia. He had great views, was an active minister, and has done much good to his country. He had managed the last famous meeting of the Cortes, which secured to the Queen certain powers, and he then fell the victim of his own management.

The person who has won most of my esteem and regard in Spain is the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo. He was Archbishop of Mexico, wrote a history of Cortez's expedition, which the Inquisition thought too free. He gave me a copy of it, being, he said, the only one remaining. He made me visit Toledo, and was really friendly to me. Speaking of religion, he said there was but *one*, and the word explained itself, *religo;* it kept society together. His revenues are about 100,000*l.* a-year, and he has opened his purse, as far as it can go, to the unfortunate French clergy.

From Madrid I took my route to Valencia, where I passed some pleasant and instructive hours with the Count O'Reilly. I found him remarkably well informed, with great activity of mind, and a

good deal of the genius of your friend Burke, tempered by long experience in affairs. The day I left Valencia for Barcelona, I visited the ancient Saguntum. Nature could not have formed a nobler place for defence, nor a more noble conquest for Hannibal to start from his transalpine journey. From Barcelona, resembling one of our best trading ports, I embarked for Genoa.

N° CCLV.

M. NECKER *à M.* GIBBON.

Rolle, Mars 19, 1793.

NOUS comptons, Monsieur, quitter Rolle vers la fin du mois. La santé de Madame Necker la rend impatiente de changer d'air, et nous irons plus ou moins long tems nous établir à Copet. Nous avons toujours en perspective d'aller passer quelques jours avec vous, et nous prendrons le moment où nos idées sur l'avenir seront plus arrêtées. Peut-être aurions-nous le plaisir de vous recevoir auparavant; il y auroit bien de la grace à vous à en user ainsi. On a toujours plus besoin d'un ami tel que vous. Il nous en coûte véritablement de renvoyer à un autre moment le plaisir que nous nous proposions, mais nous l'aurons sans cesse en perspective, et je laisserai alors à Madame Necker la satisfaction de vous l'annoncer. Je lui ai promis, foi de votre raison, de votre indulgence, et de votre amitié, que vous approuverez ce petit dérangement; et que vous ne serez pas moins disposé à nous recevoir avec bonté dans un autre moment.

L'addresse

L'addresse de ma fille est à Juniper Hall, *viâ London*. Je vous ai addressé, il y a trois jours, une lettre de cette dame, qui ne sçait encore ce qu'elle fera. Son mari est à Paris, mais sans caractère diplomatique: il nous laisse ignorer s'il a dessein de venir ici, et il n'a écrit qu'une lettre fort courte à Madame Necker.

N° CCLVI.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to the Right Honourable Lady* ELIZABETH FOSTER, *at* Florence.

Lausanne, April 4th, 1793.

HAD I not given previous notice of my own unworthiness, the plea of being an old incorrigible offender would serve only to aggravate my guilt; it is still sufficiently black, and I can patiently hear every reproach, except the cruel and unjust imputation of having forgotten my fair friends of the Arno and the Tyber. They would indeed have been less present to my thoughts, had I maintained a regular *weekly* correspondence; since, by the effect of my negligence, not a *day* has elapsed without a serious, though fruitless, resolution of writing by the very next post. What may have somewhat contributed, besides original sin, to this vile procrastination, is the course of events that has filled this abominable winter. As long as the poor King's fate was in suspense, one waited from post to post, between hope and fear, and when the blow was struck, even Shakespeare's language was inadequate to express our grief and indignation. I have never approved the execution of Charles the First;

yet Charles had invaded, in many respects, the ancient constitution of England, and the question had been judged in the field of Naseby before it was tried in Westminster-hall. But Louis had given and suffered every thing. The cruelty of the French was aggravated by ingratitude, and a life of innocence was crowned by the death of a saint, or, what is far better, of a virtuous prince, who deserves our pity and esteem. He might have lived and reigned, had he possessed as much active courage as he was endowed with patient fortitude. When I read the accounts from home, of the universal grief and indignation which that fatal event excited, I indeed gloried in the character of an Englishman. Our national fame is now pure and splendid; we have nobly stood forth in the common cause of mankind; and although our armaments are somewhat slow, I still persuade myself that we shall give the last deadly wound to the Gallic hydra. The King of Prussia is likewise slow, and your poor friend, the Duke of Brunswick, is now not censured but forgotten. We turn our eyes to the Prince of Cobourg and his Austrians, and it must be confessed, that the deliverance of Holland and Brabant from such a dragon as Dumourier is a very tolerable employment for the month of March. These blossoms of the spring will be followed, it may be fairly hoped, by the fruits of summer; and in the meanwhile the troubles of Paris, and the revolt of the provinces, may promote, by the increase of anarchy, the restoration of order. I see that restoration through

through a dark cloud; but if France be lost, the rest of Europe, I believe and trust will be saved. But amidst the hurricane, I dare not fix my eyes on the *Temple*. So much for politics, which now engross the waking and sleeping thoughts of every feeling and thinking animal. In this country we are tranquil, and I believe safe, at least for this summer; though peace has been purchased at some expense of national honour, of the old reputation of Swiss courage, we have crouched before the tiger, and stroked him till he has sheathed his claws, and ceased for a moment to roar. My journey to England this year must depend on the events of the campaign; as I am fully resolved rather to remain quiet another autumn and winter in my sweet habitation, than to encounter the dangers of the sea and land. I envy the pleasures which you and your companions have enjoyed at Florence and Rome; nor can I decide which have tasted the most perfect delight, those to whom such beauties were new, or those to whom they were familiar. A fine eye, correct judgment, and elegant sensibility, are requisite to qualify the studious traveller; and these gifts have been liberally dispensed among the Ouchy caravan. But when you have been gratified, though not satiated, with the Hesperian prospect, to what fortunate clime will you direct your footsteps? Have we any hopes of meeting (for my journey, at all events, would be late) in the shades, or rather in the sunshine, of Ouchy? Should Mount Cenis be still imperious, you have trampled on St. Bernard

in a more rigorous season; and whatsoever may be the state of the world, the Pays de Vaud will afford you a secure asylum, or a pleasant station. I rejoice to hear of Lady Besborough's improvement. Will that new title make any difference in the plan? Is the Duchess very impatient to revisit England? Except some trifling considerations of children, &c. all countries may be indifferent to her; as she is sure of being loved and admired in all. I am anxious and impatient to learn the result of your counsels; but I feel myself unworthy of a regular correspondence, and am not desirous of heaping fresh coals of fire on my head.

I am happy to find that you forgive and pity my friend Necker, against whom you all entertained some Versailles prejudices. As his heart has been always pure, he cannot feel remorse; but as his conduct has been unsuccessful, he is penetrated with grief and regret. Madame de Staël has written to me from England; she likes the country, but means to fly over again in May.

N° CCLVII.

Mr. GIBBON *to Lord* LOUGHBOROUGH.

MY LORD, * Rolle, February 23d, 1793.

I DO not merely congratulate your Lordship's promotion to an office† which your abilities have long deserved. My satisfaction does not arise

* A town between Lausanne and Geneva, where M. Necker then resided.

† Lord Loughborough had lately been appointed Lord High Chancellor. S.

from

from an assurance of the wisdom and vigour which administration will derive from the support of so respectable an ally. But as a friend to government in general, I most sincerely rejoice that you are now armed in the common cause against the most dangerous fanatics that have ever invaded the peace of Europe; against the new barbarians, who labour to confound the order and happiness of society; and who, in the opinion of thinking men, are not less the enemies of subjects than of kings. The hopes of the wise and good are now fixed on the success of England; and I am persuaded that my personal attachment to your Lordship will be amply gratified by the important share which your counsels will assume in that success. I could wish that some of your former associates possessed sufficient strength of mind to extricate themselves from the toils of prejudice and party. But I grieve that a man, whom it is impossible for me not to love and admire, should refuse to obey the voice of his country; and I begin to fear that the powerful genius of Mr. Fox, instead of being useful, will be adverse to the public service. At this momentous crisis we should enlist our whole force of virtue, ability, and spirit; and without any view to his private advantage, I could wish that our friend Lord * * * * * * might be properly stationed in some part of the line.

Mr. Necker, in whose house I am now residing on a visit of some days, wishes me to express the sentiments of esteem and consideration which he entertains for your Lordship's character. As a

friend to the interest of mankind, he is warmly attached to the welfare of Great Britain, which he has long revered as the first, and perhaps as the last asylum of genuine liberty. His late eloquent work, *Du Pouvoir Executif*, which your Lordship has assuredly read, is a valuable testimony of his esteem for our constitution; and the testimony of a sagacious and impartial stranger may have taught some of our countrymen to value the political blessings which they have been tempted to despise.

I cherish a lively hope of being in England, and of paying my respects to your Lordship before the end of the summer; but the events of the year are so uncertain, and the sea and land are encompassed with so many difficulties and dangers that I am doubtful whether it will be practicable for me to execute my purpose.

I am, my Lord, most respectfully, and your Lordship will permit me to add most affectionately, your most faithful humble servant.

N° CCLVIII.

Dr. VINCENT *to Mr.* GIBBON.

SIR, Dean's-yard, July 20th, 1793.

I AM happy that any accidental circumstance should have introduced me to a correspondence with Mr. Gibbon, and I trust you will excuse me a delay of one moment, which I wish to employ in expressing my respect for your works. With all the prejudices that men of my profession have, and ought to have, against particular parts, I confess with the highest satisfaction the pleasure and instruction

struction I have received from every thing that is critical and historical; out of the numerous body of authors you have made use of, I have always followed your narration with such as I could procure: your fidelity, accuracy, and the happy use you have made of them, has taught me an attention I was not master of before, out of many instances I mention Ammianus as the first.

And now, Sir, permit me to inform you that from Dr. Nichol's book, which is in my possession, you were entered at Westminster School, in the second form, in January, 1748, the precise day is not noticed, but probably from the 10th to the 16th, it was the same year I was entered myself in the September following. The time of your quitting the school cannot appear from this book, but by calculating the *removes*, I should think you might fix it accurately yourself. Your age is noticed, as is that of all the others in Dr. N.'s book, which makes you 9 years old in 1748.

If there is any other inquiry that I can promote, I shall be happy to receive your commands.

I remain with great respect,
Your most faithful and obedient servant,
W. VINCENT.

N° CCLIX.

Dr. VINCENT *to Mr.* GIBBON.

Dean's-yard, July 22d, 1793.

DR. Vincent is able to assure Mr. Gibbon, from his own entrance in the same year, that the year of

of Dr. Nichol is certainly 1748, and he thinks he can bring to Mr. Gibbon's remembrance, facts that will fully satisfy his own mind. Boyle, afterwards Earl of Orrery, was one of the principal actors in Ignoramus, represented in December, 1747, and would of course continue *Captain* till Whitsuntide 1748. Fury succeeded him. These are such remarkable epochs in the chronology of boys, that few forget them. Dr. Vincent is sure of his own memory likewise, when he asserts that he remembers Mr. Gibbon in the 2d form, and at Mrs. Porten's house in 1748, as he lived next door with Hutton the nonjuror.

If Mr. Gibbon should still have any doubts Dr. V. will not think any thing a trouble, which may contribute to remove them.

N° CCLX.

Mr. PINKERTON *to Mr.* GIBBON.

SIR, London, 23d July, 1793.

I HOPE you will pardon this intrusion, after our appointment at Mr. Nicol's, which I was very sorry the extreme heat of the day constrained you to defer, as it would have given me the greatest of pleasures to have been known to you. Indeed I have expressed upon many occasions, that I regarded you as the first of living authors; and perhaps the only one in the world who has united genius, erudition, philosophy, eloquence, all in the most consummate degree. After this you may judge how severe the disappointment was to me; and as I hear

hear that you will not be in town for some time, I hope you will forgive my impatience in writing to you.

It gave me extreme satisfaction to learn the proposed scheme of publishing our ancient historians, under the auspices of the greatest of modern historians, and whose name alone would ensure success to the work, and occasion the revival of an important study, too much and too long neglected in this otherwise scientific country. Your favourable mention of me as reviser flattered me much, for *magnum laudari a laudatis*. I should not only exert all my industry in collating MSS. revising the press, &c. but should execute my labours *con amore*, as on the favourite object of long pursuit; but all this would be nothing without your name, which is a tower of strength; and as Mr. Nicol expressed his hope that you would consent to give your advice, as to the authors employed, and other important points, so he and I warmly join (and I hear the literary voice of present and future nations accord with ours) in the request that you will allow your name to appear as superintending the work, or as the Latin, I believe, would express it, *curante*, &c. It is also hoped that you will spare a few hours to clothe the Prospectus, upon which much depends, with your powerful eloquence, which, like a coat of mail, unites the greatest splendour with the greatest strength.

If you consent to this, as Mr. Nicol wishes that no time may be lost, I shall begin to prepare materials for the Prospectus, and send them to you when

when your convenience suits. This will be the more easy as, in the year 1788, I published in the Gentleman's Magazine twelve "Letters to the people of Great Britain, on the cultivation of their national history," pointing out the deficiencies in this line of study. Among others I mentioned that in the Saxon Chronicle not less than fifty pages may be found in MSS. in the Museum, which are wanting in Gibson's edition, a book consisting of only 244 pages.

But I must repeat that all our hopes of success depend on your name alone. I humbly request that you will let me know your sentiments on the occasion, at your convenience; and have the honour to be with infinite respect,

Sir, your most obedient
and faithful servant,
JOHN PINKERTON.

N° CCLXI.

Mr. GIBBON *to Mr.* PINKERTON.

DEAR SIR, Sheffield Place, 25th July, 1793.

ON the principal subject of your letter I shall explain myself with the frankness becoming your character and my own. Above twelve years ago, in a note to the third volume of my history, I expressed the surprise and shame, which I had long entertained, that, after the example and success of the other countries of Europe, England alone, with such superior materials, should not have yet formed a collection of her original historians. I still

still persevere in the same sentiments, that the work would be acceptable to the public, and honourable to all the persons at whose expense, or by whose labour, it should be executed. I might doubt whether any single editor, however learned or laborious, could perform a task of such magnitude and variety with sufficient dispatch to satisfy the impatience of the world: yet I am not much a friend to republics of any kind; nor, in the choice of a sole or chief artist, do I know of any one so well qualified as yourself, by your previous studies, your love of historic truth, your Herculean industry, and the vigorous energies of your mind and character.

Thinking as I do, and called upon in so pressing and particular a manner, by yourself and Mr. Nicol, it is incumbent on me to explain for how much I can undertake. I will embrace every opportunity, both public and private, of declaring my approbation of the work, and my esteem for the editor. I shall be always ready to assist at your secret committee; to offer my advice with regard to the choice and arrangement of your materials; and to join with you in forming a general outline of the plan. If you proceed in drawing up a prospectus, I shall consider it with my best attention; nor shall I be averse to the crowning your solid edifice with something of an ornamental frieze. When the subscription is proposed, I shall underwrite my name for, at least, six copies: and I trust that a large contribution from a moderate fortune will be received as a sincere and unequivocal mark of approbation. But you seem to wish for

for somewhat more, the public use of my name as Curator, or superintendent, of the work; and on this delicate and ambiguous point you must allow me to pause. My name (qualecunque sit) I could not lend with fairness to the public, or credit to myself, without engaging much farther than I am either able or willing to do. Our old English historians have never been the professed object of my studies; my literary occupations, or rather amusements, lead me into a very distant path, and my speedy return to the Continent (next spring at the latest) will preclude all opportunities of regular inspection, or frequent correspondence.

I am, dear Sir, with the most sincere regard,
Your faithful humble servant,
E. GIBBON.

IT was Mr. Pinkerton's Inquiry into the History of Scotland, a book always mentioned by Mr. Gibbon with high applause, which induced him to apply to its author to undertake the publication of this great national design, first formed by our eminent historian. Some of the objections in this letter were overcome: it was agreed that Mr. Cadell, if he chose, should be nominated publisher, &c. The final arrangement was, that Mr. Pinkerton's name should appear in the title-page as sole editor; but that Mr. Gibbon should write a general preface to the work, and a particular preface to each volume, containing a review of the history, and historians of each epoch; for which purpose, on his return to Lausanne, he was to peruse all the ancient English historians in a chronological course, a labour which he mentioned with pleasure, as the last and most favourite occupation of his life. So vain are human hopes! Mr. Gibbon also agreed to write the Prospectus, and to allow it to appear with his name; but he died on the day appointed for its publication, and with him any views of success in a design of such magnitude, which it was doubtful if even his name and co-operation could have carried into effect.

N°

N° CCLXII.

EDWARD GIBBON, *Esq. to Lord* AUCKLAND.

St. James's-street, No. 76, Nov. 27th, 1793.

MY DEAR LORD,

I SHOULD reproach myself with neglecting one of the best comforts of life, the enjoyment of instructive and agreeable society, did I not seek to visit Beckenham in my way to Sheffield-place. I must therefore ask whether it will suit with your other arrangements to receive me at dinner either Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday next week, to keep me the next day, and to dismiss me the following morning after breakfast. I shall expect your commands, and in the mean while request that you would present my compliments to Lady Auckland, whom I revere as a second Eve, the mother of nations,* though I am persuaded that she would not, like Eve, have eaten the apple.

My dear Lord,

Most sincerely yours,

E. GIBBON.

N° CCLXIII.

Monsieur NECKER *à Monsieur* GIBBON.

Lausanne, Novembre, 1793.

† QUELLE courage, Monsieur, quelle sérénité à côté de tant d'esprit, et d'imagination! C'est donc

* The allusion is to the births of children in England, America, Ireland, France, Spain, and Holland.

† This letter was written immediately after Mr. Necker had received the account of Mr. Gibbon's having undergone the operation of tapping.

à vos

à vos amis seuls à éprouver vos maux, et à s'en inquiéter. Ah! ils rempliront trop bien cette fonction. Notre intérêt, nos vœux, vous environnent, et de notre terrasse nous voyons, nous regardons votre maison, et nous irons en ouvrir les portes et les fenêtres dès qu'on nous apprendra que vous revenez l'habiter. Vous avez rendu cet asile trop célèbre pour l'oublier, et le vif sentiment avec lequel nous entendons parler de vous, nous est un garant de votre retour.

Nous sommes à Lausanne depuis quelques jours, et nous avons depuis reçu plusieurs visites de la cité. La rue du Bourg, ainsi que de raison, attend qu'on la previenne; mais moi, revenu des grandeurs de la terre, après avoir fait une visite de devoir au Seigneur Bailly, et au Seigneur Bourguemestre, et une de goût, et de reconnoissance à Madame de Sévéry, je me tiendrai clos dans mon manoir. Adieu, Monsieur, agréez, je vous prie, les assurances de mon inviolable attachement.

N° CCLXIV.

Rev. Dr. COOKE, *Dean of Ely, and Provost of King's College, Cambridge, to Lord* SHEFFIELD.

King's College, April 11th, 1796.

AND so even nobles, it seems, can condescend to make their visits, after the mode of the good parsons in the West, with their wives behind them. I take leave to kiss both hands with all due respect and veneration, as proof of that perfect harmony and union, of which every friend must be happy to

to have the assurance, which must ever result from equal good sense, good humour, and virtue, and be rather more close, more tender and delicate, than the most intimate connexion between author and editor. In making my acknowledgments, my most dear Lord, for your late very kind notice of me, you will suffer me to remark something of error: it was not to be supposed, that any thing should appear under your sanction which I should not eagerly possess myself of the first moment I could obtain it. Amidst all my interruptions, I have advanced considerably into the Extraits du Journal, and I admire him even more in them than in his History: such variety of reading, such justness of reflexions, such neatness and precision of expression, are not to be found in any of the Anas with which I am acquainted; nor am I aware of any publication that does equal honour to both the parties concerned in it. I have no doubt of your just title to the merit of the observation, that

> Poets lose half the praise they would have got,
> Did we but know what they discreetly blot.

It is indeed matter of sincere pleasure to me, as well on your Lordship's account as your friend's, that so little appears that can give offence. The great desideratum is, and a most wonderful one, that a professed historian, whose province it is to be guided by evidence, should not submit to the glaring evidences of our religion,—evidences, even at this day, of our senses,—and if examined, irresistible: the misfortune is, that they are not examined

and considered:—but this world cheats us of our immortal hopes. I beg pardon; I will not, and I trust I need not, preach. Your Lordship will kindly forgive my zeal, and be assured of my anxious wishes of every happiness to yourself and all who are dear to you both now and for ever. My heart has been so full, as to have forgotten, I find, to express how highly honoured and gratified we shall be by the present you have so obligingly intimated.

I am ever, my dear Lord,
Under the strongest impression of all your favours,
Your most sincere, obliged, and faithful and affectionate Servant,
WM. COOKE.

N CCLXV.

Rev. Dr. COOKE, *Dean of Ely, and Provost of King's College, Cambridge, to Lord* SHEFFIELD.

MY DEAR GOOD LORD, April 26th, 1796.

THE precious volumes have safely reached us, and shall be deposited pari jugo, or cheek by jole, with the six of which we have long been possessed, and to which they make so very valuable an Appendix. I am at a loss indeed to say, whether the great historian of empires and of the changes and chances of the world in general, may be of more use and consequence than the faithful narrator, as he appears in your Lordship's representation, of the humbler incidents of private life, of the occa-

occasional reflexions that arise upon them, and the happiness of a sincere, long-continued, and uninterrupted friendship. The last I am sure come much more closely home to our personal businesses and bosoms, and must have a greater influence on our own immediate conduct; nor can I hesitate to affirm, in an allusion which Mr. Gibbon himself, if he could have known the posthumous care and attention to his fame and character, would have applied,

> Fortunati ambo!
> Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet ævo—

You will go down together to late posterity with as much just distinction as any of the memorable duets of antiquity. While I congratulate your Lordship on the close of your meritorious labour for one friend, let me intreat your intercession with Lady Sheffield for my not having particularly expressed the high sense I have of the honour of her Ladyship's late notice with which she so obligingly favoured me: nor will it be a slight gratification, if Miss Holroyd may retain any memory of a former admirer, or Miss Louisa, of the happiness she communicated by a few transient interviews at Bath. May every blessing attend your Lordship, and all who are dear to you! so prayeth most heartily

Your ever most truly obliged and most
Faithful humble Servant,
WILLIAM COOKE.

N° CCLXVI.

The Rev. NORTON NICHOLLS *to Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Blundeston, June 2d, 1796.

I HAVE delayed so long to write to you, my dear Lord, not certainly from indifference to you or to the posthumous fame of Gibbon which owes so much to your friendly and judicious exertions— The work more than answers my expectation; such a faithful, interesting, and agreeable portrait of a human mind endowed with the most extraordinary powers, enriched with all the treasures of learning, embellished with all the graces that good taste and polished society can bestow; impelled by an insatiable desire of knowledge to an activity in the pursuit of it, the eagerness and constancy of which has seldom been equalled; such a portrait has scarcely ever been given to the world, and never with such a curious and happy detail. As for his moral character, you have exhibited it in a new point of view *even to me;* till that admirable letter preceding his last departure from Switzerland I had no idea of the warmth and energy of his friendship; but the incomparable letters which you have published teem with proofs, most honourable to the heart and sentiments of their author. The account of his studies is as useful as it is singular, and may serve to point out to others the path to literature which so few pursue. Nothing *ran through* his mind; every subject worthy of attention was sifted, examined, and dissected. The ideas of others produced a new train in him which he generally

generally carried far beyond the original. The style of his letters is *perfect*,—equally easy, elegant, accurate, pleasant, and even playful. The outlines of the History of the World (which I had not seen) is masterly. It was impossible for him to be superficial.

I cannot help congratulating you on having produced a work as honourable to you, as to your friend; and I am convinced that its popularity will be equal to its merit.

Adieu, my dear Lord, believe me to be ever most faithfully yours,

N. NICHOLLS.

N° CCLXVII.

Extract of a Letter from GREGORY LEWIS WAY, *Esq. to Lord* SHEFFIELD.

Spencer Farm, August 28th, 1796.

I HAVE finished the first volume of the Gibboniana. With parts of it I was delighted and interested extremely. Of his satire on Oxford I can hardly be deemed an *impartial* reader. His opinions on public affairs and public men, I swallowed with avidity and approbation. But his French letters of courtship to Deyverdun are delicious indeed: and in the minute incidents connected with his *Work*, I stand invisible behind him; I steal along his grove of Acacias, and my mind participates in his exultation and in his gloom. Shall I add, that in his honest and manly retirement from public life, and in his estimate of the comparative charms of

of politics and philosophy, he has also a powerful echo in my bosom? I trust that, like him, I should have been able, in spite of "mes amis, qui ne veulent pas me permettre d'être heureux suivant mon goût, et mes lumières," to have persisted in a like line of conduct; since I have his authority for flattering myself that I "possess a disposition somewhat similar to his own." The names of *Chelsum* and *Randolph* I have not forgotten, though I suspect myself of never having read their books.

N° CCLXVIII.

SAMUEL ROSE, *Esq. to Lord* SHEFFIELD.

MY DEAR LORD, Denham Lodge, Sept. 7th, 1796.

I HAVE been in Oxfordshire, and am now in Norfolk, visiting my valuable but unhappy friend Cowper, who, though certainly better than he has been, still continues a victim to melancholy and despair. It is a dreadful sight!—such talents so laid waste by so merciless a disorder claim our pity now, as much as, in a different state, they before excited our admiration. But it is not the object of this letter to communicate to your Lordship those painful sensations which must necessarily be felt by every benevolent mind at hearing of the continued misery this gentleman suffers. It is rather the object of this letter to give you pleasure, who are ever so active in creating and promoting the enjoyment of others.

I lately heard from my friend Mr. Mackenzie of Edinburgh, who has distinguished himself in the literary

literary world by his Man of Feeling, and other ingenious publications. He speaks in the following just and appropriate terms of your Lordship's last work, which I transcribe with great satisfaction, as they express my sentiments upon the subject, and as they come with weight from so distinguished a character as Mr. Mackenzie:

"With Mr. Gibbon's volumes, particularly the first, I was much entertained and gratified. To see so much of the life and manners of a celebrated man, is always gratifying; in this case it was peculiarly so, from the increased esteem which it excited for that man, by exhibiting him in so amiable a view as a relation and a friend. Lord Sheffield and his family formed a very interesting group in the picture. Among authors and public men it is not very common, and it is very pleasing, to find such continued and warm affection and attachment; and the man of taste, as well as of virtue, is deeply indebted to the editor, who can thus unfold to him such sources of moral as well as literary pleasure."

This is one, among many honourable testimonies, you have received of the value and importance of your very entertaining publication; a publication which will increase in the good opinion of the public, in proportion as they become better acquainted with its contents.

Your Lordship's obliged and affectionate,

SAMUEL ROSE.

END OF VOL. II.

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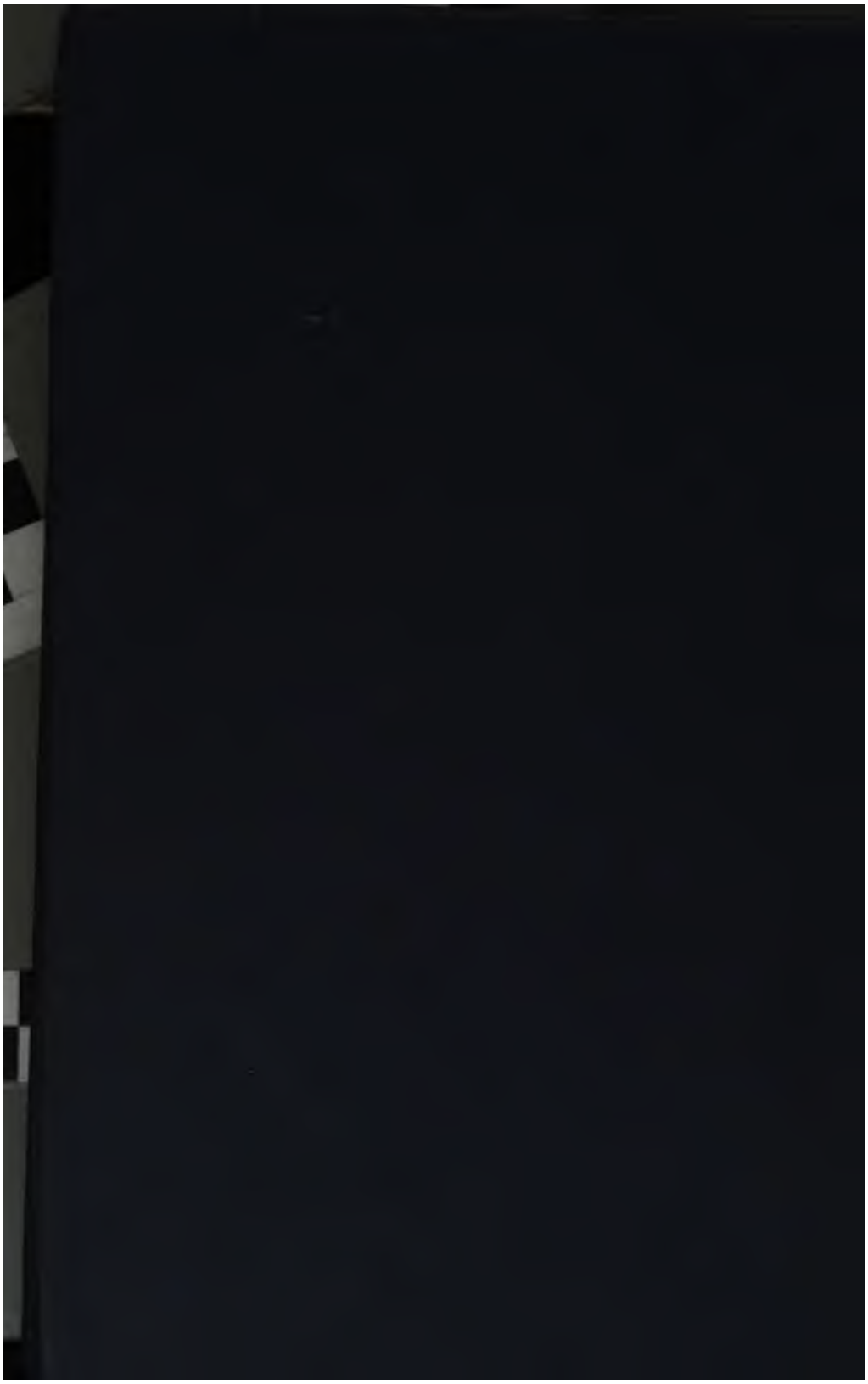
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